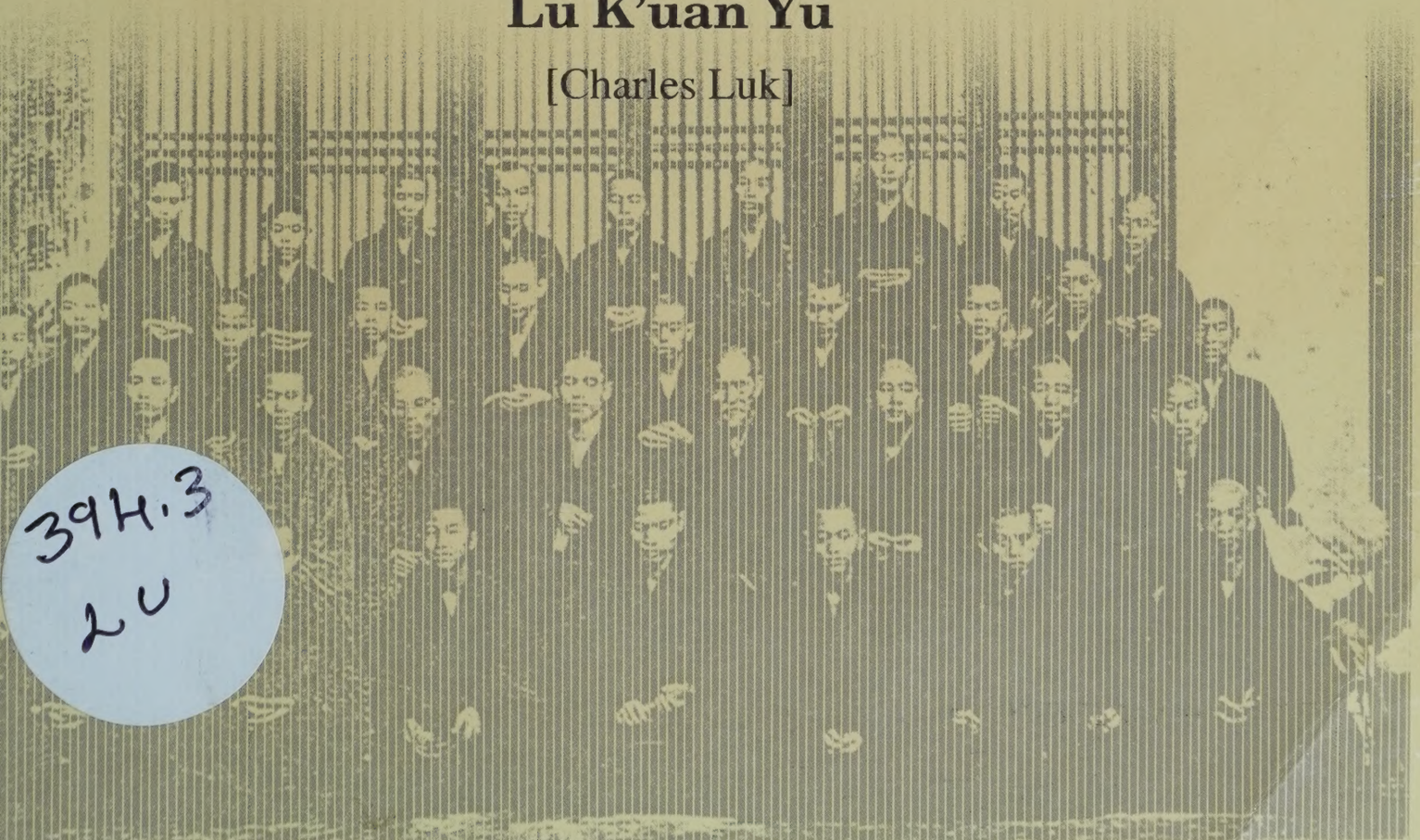
MASTER HSU YUN'S DISCOURSES AND DHARMA WORDS

Edited, Translated and Explained by

Lu K'uan Yü

[Charles Luk]



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ಜೈನ ಗ್ರಂಥಾಲಯ
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DISCOURSES

AND DHARMA WORDS

Edited, Translated and Explained by

Lu K'uan Yü
[Charles Luk]

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虛雲和尚法相

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虛雲和尚禪七開示錄

七十餘歲（一九一〇至一二之間）
Rev. Hsu Yun at the age of 70
(1910-12)

雲南昆明西山雲棲寺
攝於一九二四至二六年之間
Photo taken between 1924-26 at
Yun Chai Monastery, Kwun Ming

攝於湧泉寺前與國府主席林森
（一九三一）
Photo taken with ex.-Chairman
Mr. Lam Sam in 1931

一九三五年攝於南華寺丈室
Photo taken in 1935 at
the Nam Hua Monastery

一九四六年於潮州開元寺
Photo taken in 1946 at
Kai Yuen Monastery of Chiu Chow

一九四七年於曹溪南華寺傳千佛羅漢大戒後攝是次來求戒者一千五餘人，連老戒戒師近二千人極一時之盛
Photo taken in 1947 at
Nam Hua Monastery of Tsao Kai

攝於南華寺客堂前（一九四七年）
Photo taken in 1947 at
Nam Hua Monastery

攝於雲門寺天王殿前（一九四七年）
Photo taken in 1947 at
Yun Mun Monastery

一九四八年戒律學院部分學生
Photo taken in 1948 at
Precept Institute of Nam Hua Monastery

前中得戒和尚雲公、前左開堂知定法師、
前右羯磨智參法師（一九四八年）
Photo taken in 1948 at
Nam Hua Monastery

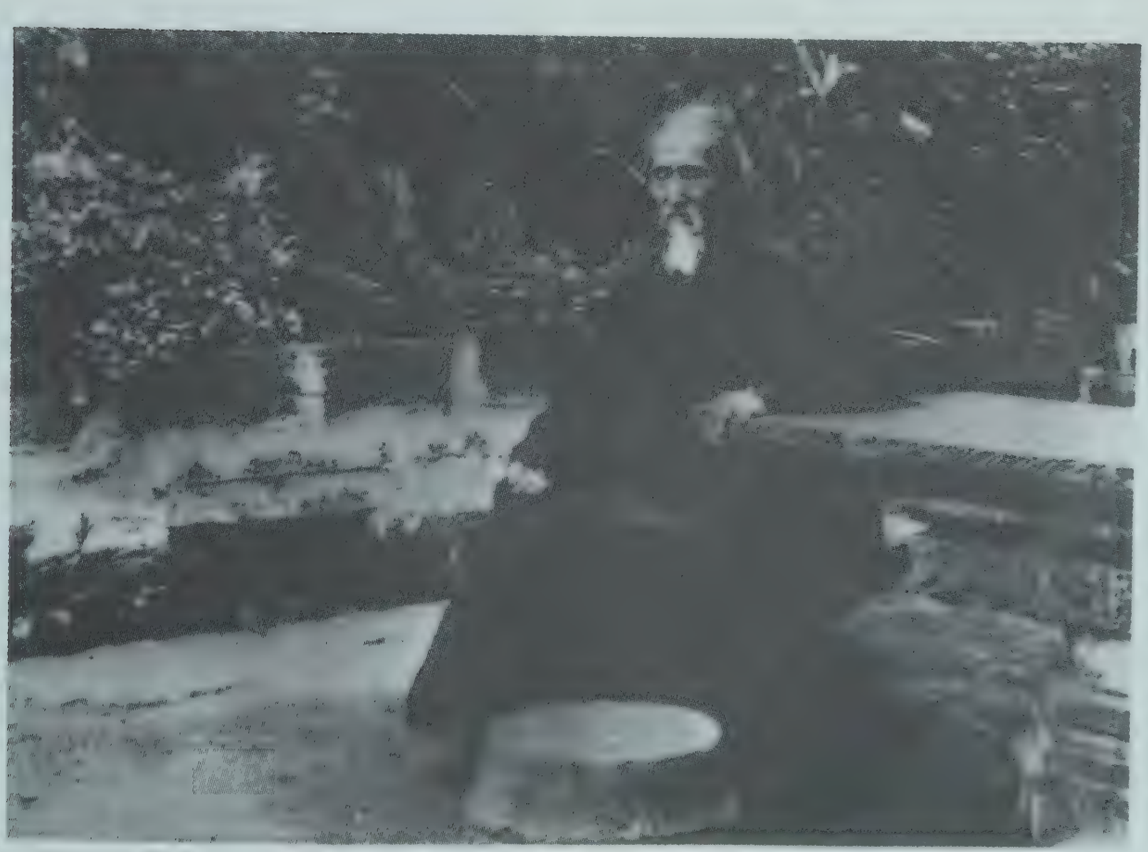
一九四七年攝於廣州鄒魯公館前
Photo taken in 1947 at Canton

一九四七攝於鄒魯公館門前
Photo taken in 1947 at Canton

一九四七年攝於鄒魯公館門前
Photo taken in 1947 at Canton

一九四七年戒期畢水陸洒淨
Photo taken in 1947 after
the Precepts Ceremony

一九四七年攝於加路連南華
球場內水陸法會的大壇前
Photo taken in 1947 at
S. C. A. A. Ceremony Hong Kong



雲門寺方丈室之花園（一九四八至四九年）
Photo taken in 1948
to 49 at Yun Mun Monastery

雲公在廣西桂林與道安法師合影（一九四三年冬）
Rev. Hsu Yun and Rev. Tao An in
1943 Winter at Kwai Lin of Kwang-Si

與高旻寺住持禪門巨匠於上海攝（一九五二年）
Photo taken in 1952 at
Kao Mun Monastery of Shanghai

雲居山眞如寺（一九五五年十二月二日）

Photo taken on 2/12/55 at
Chun Yu Monastery of Yung Chu Shan

一九五六年攝於雲居平房前

Photo taken in 1956
at Yung Chu House

虛雲老和尚法相

一九五六年於雲居大殿前

Photo taken on 2/12/56 at
Chun Yu Monastery of Yung Chu Shan

雲居山眞寺攝，時年高已一百一十九歲
（一九五八）

Rev. Hsu Yun aged 119(1958) at
Chun Yu Monastery of Yung Chu Shan

攝於雲門寺新起之大殿地下趺坐
（一九四八）
Photo taken in 1948 at
Yun Mun Monastery

一九四七年於廣州西關鄒魯公館前花園攝
Photo taken in 1947 at
the garden of Sai Kwan Canton

在北京廣濟寺啓建世界和平息災法會
於大壇前祈求請聖（一九五二）
Photo taken in 1952 at Kwong Chai
Monastery Peace Dharma Ceremony

北京廣濟寺追悼法會該相攝於一九五二
年，圓寂後安奉供設。
Photo taken in 1952 at
Kwong Chai Monastery in Peking

虛雲老和尚舍利塔（江西省雲居山眞如寺）

The Sarira Pagoda of Rev. Hsu Yun at Chun Yu Monastery of Yu Chu Shan.

I

Prerequisites of the Ch'an Training

(*From the Hsu Yun Ho Shang Fa Hui*) 1

THE object of Ch'an training is to realize the mind for the perception of (self-) nature, that is to wipe out the impurities which soil the mind so that the fundamental face of self-nature can really be perceived. Impurities are our false thinking and clinging (to things as real). Self-nature is the meritorious characteristic of the Tathāgata wisdom which is the same in both Buddhas and living beings. If one's false thinking and grasping are cast aside, one will bear witness to the meritorious characteristic of one's Tathāgata wisdom and will become a Buddha, otherwise one will remain a living being. For since countless aeons, our own delusion has immersed us in the (sea of) birth and death. Since our defilement has (already) lasted so long, we are unable instantly to free ourselves from false thinking in order to perceive our self-nature. This is why we must undergo Ch'an training. The prerequisite of this training is the eradication of false thinking. As to how to wipe it out, we have already many sayings of Śākyamuni Buddha and nothing is simpler than the word 'Halt' in His saying: 'If it halts, it is Enlightenment (Bodhi).[1]

The Ch'an sect from its introduction by Bodhidharma after his arrival in the East until after the passing of the Sixth Patriarch, spread widely all over the country and enjoyed great prosperity, unknown before and after that period. However, the most important thing taught by Bodhidharma and the Sixth Patriarch was only this: 'Expel all concurrent causes; do not give rise to a single thought.' To expel all concurrent causes is to lay them down.[2] Therefore, these two sentences: 'Expel all concurrent causes. Do not give rise to a single thought', are the prerequisites of Ch'an training. If these two sentences are not put into actual practice, not only will the training be ineffective, but also it will be

[1] The full sentence is: The mad mind does not halt; if it halts, it is Bodhi, i.e. enlightenment.

[2] In Ch'an terminology, 'to lay down causes or thoughts' is to lay down the heavy load of causes or thoughts to free the mind from defilement.

impossible to start it, for in the midst of causes which rise and fall, thought after thought, how can you talk about Ch'an training?

Now we know that (the sentences): 'Expel all concurrent causes. Do not give rise to a single thought' are the prerequisites of Ch'an training; how can we fulfil these prerequisites? Those of high spirituality are able to halt for ever the arising of a single thought until they reach (the state of) birthlessness and will thereby instantaneously realize enlightenment (bodhi) without any more ado. Those of lower spirituality will deduce the underlying principle[1] from facts[2] and will thoroughly understand that the self-nature is fundamentally pure and clean and that distress (kleśa)[3] and enlightenment as well as birth, death and Nirvāṇa are all empty names having no connexion whatever with self-nature; that phenomena are like a dream, an illusion, a bubble and a shadow; and that the four basic elements constituting the physical body, as well as mountains, rivers and the great earth which are within self-nature, are just like bubbles in the sea. These phenomena rise and fall following one another in succession without interfering with the essence (of self-nature). Therefore, one should not follow illusion in its creation, stay, change and annihilation and give rise to feelings of joy, sadness, attachment and rejection. One should lay down everything with which one's body is burdened, thus becoming exactly like a dead man. The outcome will be that sense-organs, sense-data and consciousness will vanish and that concupiscence, anger, stupidity and love will be eliminated. When all our feelings of joy and sadness, of the cold of hunger and the warmth of one's fill, of honour and dishonour, of birth and death, of happiness and misery, of blessing and calamity, of praise and censure, of gain and loss, of safety and danger, and of handicap and help, are all cast aside, this is the true laying down (of everything). To lay down a thing is to lay down everything for ever, and this is called the laying down of all concurrent causes. When all concurrent causes have been laid down, false thinking will vanish with the non-arising of differentiation and the elimination of all attachments. When one reaches this state of the non-arising of a single thought, the brightness of self-nature will appear in full.[4] Then only can the prerequisites of Ch'an training be entirely fulfilled. Further efforts in the true training and real instrospection will be required if one wishes to be qualified for realizing the mind for the perception of self-nature.

Recently, Ch'an Buddhists often came to inquire (about all this). As

[1] Underlying principle: theory, noumenon.
[2] Facts: activity, practice, phenomenon.
[3] Kleśa: distress, worry, trouble and whatever causes them.
[4] This is the state described in Han Shan's 'Song of the Board-bearer'.

to the Dharma, fundamentally there is no such thing, because as soon as it is expressed in words, the meaning will not be true. Just see clearly that mind is Buddha and there will be no more ado. This is self-evident and all talks of practice and realization are the demon's words. Bodhidharma, who came to the East to 'directly point at man's mind for the perception of self-nature leading to the attainment of Buddhahood', clearly indicated that all living beings on earth were Buddhas. The outright cognizance of this pure and clean self-nature together with complete harmony with it, without contamination from attachment (to anything)[1] and without the least mental differentiation, while walking, standing, sitting and lying by day or night[2] is nothing but the self-evident Buddha(hood). It does not require any application of mind or use of effort. Moreover, there is no place for either action or deed, and no use for words, speech and thought. For this reason, it is said that the attainment of Buddhahood is the most free and easy thing which relies only on oneself and does not depend on others. If all living beings on this earth are not willing to pass long aeons through the successive four kinds of birth[3] in the six realms of existence[4] to stay permanently immersed in the sea of suffering, and if they wish to attain Buddhahood with the accompanying enjoyment of true eternity, true bliss, true personality and true purity,[5] they should sincerely believe the true words of the Buddha and Patriarchs, and lay down all (attachments) without thinking of either good or evil; all of them will certainly be able to become Buddhas on the spot. All Buddhas. Bodhisattvas and Patriarchs of past generations did not take the vow of liberating all living beings without warrant for so doing; they did not take vain vows and did not tell a deliberate lie.

The (qualification) above referred to, is in the state provided by nature.[6] Moreover, the Buddha and Patriarchs had expounded it again and again, and their injunction in this respect had also been repeated; theirs were true words, words corresponding to reality, which did not contain an atom of falsehood and deception. However, all living beings on this earth have been, for countless aeons, deluded and sunk in the bitter ocean of birth and death, rising and falling in their endless transmigrations. Being deluded, confused and upset, they turn their back on enlightenment and unite with impurities. They are just like real gold thrown into a manure

[1] Even attachment to the self-nature is also an impurity which should be cast aside.

[2] Literally 'during the two six-hour periods of the day'. Each day is divided into two six-hour periods, one for day-time and one for night-time.

[3] Birth from eggs, wombs and humidity, and by transformation.

[4] Worlds of gods (devas), men, spirits (asuras), animals, hungry ghosts and hells.

[5] The four transcendental realities in Nirvāṇa expounded in the Mahāparinirvāna Sūtra.

[6] i.e. 'self-so', so of itself, natural, of course, self-existing, the self-existent.

pit where it not only falls into disuse but is also deplorably soiled. Because of His great mercy, the Buddha was compelled to set up 84,000[1] Dharma doors (to enlightenment) so that living beings of different natural capacities could use them to cure the 84,000 ailments caused by their habitual concupiscence, anger, stupidity and love. In the same way you are taught to use a shovel, brush, water and cloth to wash, brush, polish and scrub the dirty piece of gold. Therefore, the Dharma doors expounded by the Buddha are all excellent Dharmas which enable one to see through birth and death and to attain Buddhahood, the only question being the adaptability or otherwise of individual potentialities. These Dharma doors should not be divided arbitrarily into superior or inferior ones. Those introduced into China are: the Ch'an Sect (Tsung), the Discipline School (Lu Tsung), the Teaching School (Chiao Tsung), the Pure Land School (Chin Tsung), and the Yoga School (Mi Tsung). Of these five Dharma doors, it is up to each man to choose the one which is suitable to his natural character and inclination, and he will surely reach his goal if he only sticks to it long enough without change of mind and deeply penetrates it.

Our sect advocates the Ch'an training. This training centres on 'realization of mind (and) perception of self-nature', that is an exhaustive investigation into one's fundamental face. The Dharma door which consists in the 'clear awakening to the self-mind and through perception of the fundamental nature' has been handed down ever since the Buddha held up a flower until after Bodhidharma's coming to the East, with frequent changes in the method of practice. Up to the T'ang (935) and Sung (1278) dynasties, most adherents of the Ch'an sect became enlightened after hearing a word or sentence. The transmission from master to disciple did not exceed the sealing of mind by mind, and there was no fixed Dharma (taught). In their questions and answers (the role played by a master) was only to untie the bonds (fettering his disciple)[2] according to available circumstances, just like the giving of an appropriate medicine for each particular ailment. In and after the Sung dynasty, human potentialities became duller, and the instructions given by the masters were not carried out by their disciples. For instance, when they were taught to 'lay down everything' and 'not to think of either good or evil', practisers could not lay down anything and could not stop thinking of either good

[1] The digits *8* and *4* symbolize respectively the eighth Vijñāna or Consciousness and the *four* basic elements of the physical body, and mean the deluded self-nature (8) held in bondage in the illusory body (4), i.e. Space. The three following zeros symbolize Time, and so long as one remains under delusion, it will be immaterial to add 10, 100, or 1,000 zeros at the end of the number. However, when one attains enlightenment in one finger-snap, the digits 8 and 4 or Space will disappear and the line of zeros, or Time, will have no meaning.

[2] i.e. freeing his disciples from restraint caused by delusion.

or evil. Under these circumstances, the ancestors and masters were compelled to devise a 'poison-against-poison' method by teaching their followers to inquire into a kung an[1] or look into a hua t'ou.[2] Their disciples were even taught to hold a meaningless hua t'ou as firmly as possible (in their minds), without loosening their grip even for the shortest possible moment, in the same way as a rat will (stubbornly) bite the board of a coffin at a fixed spot until it has made a hole. The aim of this method was to use a single thought to oppose and arrest myriad thoughts because the masters had no alternative. It was like an operation which became imperative when poison had been introduced into the body. There were many kung ans (devised by the ancients but) later only hua t'ous were taught such as: 'Who is dragging this corpse here?'[3] and 'What was my fundamental face before I was born?' In the present day, the masters use the hua t'ou: 'Who is the repeater of Buddha's name?'

All these hua t'ous have only one meaning which is very ordinary and has nothing peculiar about it. If you look into him 'Who is reciting a sūtra?', 'Who is holding a mantra?', 'Who is worshipping Buddha?', 'Who is taking a meal?', 'Who is wearing a robe?', 'Who is walking on the road?', or 'Who is sleeping?', the reply to 'Who?' will invariably be the same: 'It is Mind.' Word arises from Mind and Mind is head of (i.e. ante-) Word. Thought arises from Mind and Mind is head of Thought. Myriad things come from Mind and Mind is head of myriad things. In reality, a hua t'ou is the head of a thought (i.e. ante-thought). The head of thought is nothing but Mind. To make it plain, before a thought arises, it is a hua t'ou. From the above, we know that to look into a hua t'ou is to look into the Mind. The fundamental face before one's birth is Mind. To look into one's fundamental face before one's birth is to look into one's mind. Self-nature is Mind (and) to 'turn inwards the hearing to hear the self-nature' is to 'turn inward one's contemplation to contemplate the self-mind'.

The sentence: 'The perfect shining on the pure Awareness' means this: 'the pure awareness' is mind and 'to shine on' is to look into. Mind is Buddha and to repeat the Buddha's (name) is to contemplate the

[1] Kung an, or kōan in Japanese = A dossier, or case-record; a cause, public laws, regulations; case-law. Problems set by Ch'an masters upon which thought is concentrated as a means to attain inner unity and illumination. The meaning of a kung an is irrevocable and kung an is as valid as the law.

[2] Hua t'ou = ante-word, or ante-thought, i.e. the mind before it is stirred by a thought. It is the mind in its undisturbed condition. The holding of a hua t'ou in the mind is the looking into the self-mind until its realization. It is also the turning inward of the faculty of hearing to hear the self-nature, for the disentanglement of mind (subject) from external objects.

[3] i.e. who is dragging here this physical body of yours?

Buddha. To contemplate Buddha is to contemplate mind. Therefore, to 'look into a hua t'ou' or 'to look into him who repeats the Buddha's name' is to contemplate the mind or to contemplate the pure essence of awareness of the self-mind, or to contemplate the self-natured Buddha. Mind is self-nature, is awareness and is Buddha, having neither form nor location, and being undiscoverable. It is clean and pure by nature, penetrates everywhere in the Dharmadhātu, does not enter or leave, neither comes nor goes, and is fundamentally the self-evident pure Dharmakāya Buddha.

A practiser should keep under control all his six sense-organs and take good care of this hua t'ou by looking into where a thought usually arises, until he perceives his pure self-nature, free from all thoughts. This continuous, close, quiet and indifferent investigation will lead to a still and shining[1] contemplation (the outcome of which will be) the outright non-existence of the five constituent elements of being (skandhas)[2] and the wiping out of both body and mind, without the least thing being left behind. Thereafter, this absolute immutability (should be maintained) in every state, while walking, standing, sitting and lying by day or night. As time goes on, this achievement will be brought to perfection, resulting in the perception of self-nature and the attainment of Buddhahood, with the elimination of all distress and suffering.

Ancestor Kao Feng said:[3] 'When a student looks into a hua t'ou with the same steadiness with which a broken tile when thrown into a deep pond plunges straight down 10,000 changs to the bottom,[4] if he fails to become awakened in seven days, anyone can chop off my head and take it away.' Dear friends, these are the words of an experienced master: they are true and correspond to reality, they are not deceitful words to cheat people.

Then why in the present generation are there not even a few men who attain enlightenment in spite of the great number who hold a hua t'ou (in their minds)? This is because their potentialities are not so sharp as those of the ancients. It is also because students are confused about the correct method of training and of holding a hua t'ou. They go to various places in the four quarters, seeking instruction, and the result is that when they get old, they are still not clear about the meaning of a hua t'ou and

[1] The essence of the mind is still and its function is shining.

[2] The 5 skandhas: form, feeling, ideation, reaction and consciousness.

[3] Kao Feng was the teacher of Chung Feng whose 'Sayings of Chung Feng' (Chung Feng Kuang Lu) were read by Han Shan before the latter began his Ch'an training. (See Han Shan's Autobiography.)

[4] Chang: a measure of ten Chinese feet.

how to look into it. They pass their whole lives clinging to words and names, and applying their minds to the tail of the hua t'ou.[1] They inquire into (the sentences): 'Look into him who repeats the Buddha's name' and 'Take care of the hua t'ou', and the more they look and inquire into these sentences, the more they get away from what these sentences stand for.[2] Thus how can they be awakened to the self-evident Wu Wei (Transcendental) Supreme Reality, and how can they ascend the undisturbable Royal Throne? When gold powder is thrown into their eyes, they are blinded: how then can they send out the great illuminating ray? What a pity! What a pity! They are all good sons and good daughters who leave their homes in quest of the truth, and their determination is above the average. What a pity if they labour to no purpose! (For this reason) an ancient master said: 'It is better to remain unenlightened for a thousand years than to tread the wrong path for a day.'

Self-cultivation for awakening to the truth is easy and is (also) difficult. For example, when we turn on the electric light, if we know how, in a finger-snap there will be light and the darkness which has lasted for a myriad years will disappear. If one does not know how to turn on the light, the electric wires will be interfered with and the lamp will be damaged, resulting in an increase of passions and ignorance. There are also some people who, while undergoing Ch'an training and looking into the hua t'ou, get entangled with demons and become insane, while others vomit blood and fall sick.[3] Are the fire of ignorance bursting into flame and the deep-rooted view of self and other[4] not the obvious causes of all this? Therefore, practisers should harmonize body with mind and become calm, free from all impediments and from (the view of) self and other so as to bring about a perfect unison with their latent potentialities. Fundamentally, this method used in Ch'an training is invariably the same, but the training is both difficult and easy to beginners as well as to old hands.

Where does its difficulty lie for a beginner? Although his body and

[1] When the sentence 'who repeats the Buddha's name?' is merely repeated by a practiser who only grasps its meaning, he thinks of the 'tail' of the hua t'ou, instead of its head or anteword, that is the mind. Thus he wrongly applies his mind to 'tail' instead of 'head'.

[2] The master means that these people fail because they set their discriminating minds on grasping the meaning of these sentences, whereas in the training, their minds should first be disentangled from all discriminations.

[3] If an evil thought is allowed to slip into the concentration of mind while holding a hua t'ou, this thought will replace the hua t'ou and may grow out of proportion and become difficult to subdue. If it be a strong desire which cannot be satisfied, the resultant frustration may cause insanity. One's breath should never be interfered with, and concentration of mind should never be on the chest as it may affect the lungs and cause the vomiting of blood.

[4] View of dualism which should be wiped out.

mind are mature for it, he is still confused about the method of undergoing it, and since his practice is ineffective, he will either become impatient or spend his time in dozing with this result: 'A beginner's training in the first year, an old hand's training in the second, and no training in the third year.'

Where does its easiness lie for a beginner? It only requires a believing, a long enduring and a mindless mind. A believing mind is, firstly, belief that this mind of ours is fundamentally Buddha, not differing from all Buddhas and all living beings of the three times in the ten directions of space, and secondly, belief that all Dharmas expounded by Śākyamuni Buddha can enable us to put an end to birth and death and to attain Buddhahood. A long enduring mind consists in the choice of a method to be put into continuous practice in the present lifetime, in the next life, and in the life after next. The Ch'an training should be continued in this manner; the repetition of the Buddha's name should be continued in this manner; the holding of a mantra (mystic incantation) should be continued in this manner and the study of sūtras, which consists in putting into practice the teaching heard (i.e. learned from the Scriptures), should be continued in this manner. The practice of any Dharma door (to enlightenment) must be based on Sīla[1] and if the training is undergone in this manner, there is no reason why it will not be successful. The old master Kuei Shan[2] said: 'Anybody practising this Dharma without backsliding in three successive lives can surely expect to attain the Buddha-stage.' The old master Yung Chia said: 'If I utter deceitful words to cheat living beings, I shall be prepared to fall into the tongue-snatching hell for aeons as numberless as atoms.'

By mindlessness is meant the laying down of everything[3] so that the practiser will become like a dead man who, while following others in their normal activities, does not give rise to the least differentiation and attachment, and lives as a mindless religious man.

After a beginner has acquired these three kinds of mind, if he undergoes the Ch'an training and looks into, for instance, the hua t'ou: 'Who is the repeater of Buddha's name?' he should silently repeat a few times: 'Amitābha Buddha' and then look into him who thinks of the Buddha and where this thought arises. He should know that this thought does not arise either from his mouth or body. If it arises from either his mouth or body, why when he dies, cannot his body and mouth, which still exist,

[1] Śīla = precept, command, prohibition, discipline, rule, morality.

[2] Master *Kuei* Shan and his disciple *Yang* Shan were founders of the Kuei Yang Sect (Ikyō in Japanese), one of the five Ch'an Sects in China.

[3] i.e. free from all attachments, which are likened to a burden which one should lay down.

give rise to this thought? Therefore, he knows that this thought arises from his mind. Now he should watch (and locate) where his mind gives rise to this thought and keep on looking into it, like a cat ready to pounce on a mouse, with his exclusive attention concentrated upon it, free from a second thought. However, its sharpness and dullness should be in equal proportions. It should never be too sharp for that sharpness may cause illness. If the training is undergone in this manner, in every state, while walking, standing, sitting and lying, it will be effective as time goes on, and when cause comes to fruition, like a ripe melon which automatically falls, anything it may happen to touch or come into contact with, will suddenly cause his supreme awakening. This is the moment when the practiser will be like one who drinks water and who alone knows whether it is cold or warm, until he becomes free from all doubts about himself and experiences a great happiness similar to that when meeting one's own father at the cross-roads.

Where do both easiness and difficulty lie for an old hand? By old hand is meant one who has called on learned masters for instruction and has undergone the training for many years during which his body and mind were mature for it and he was clear about the method which he could practise comfortably without experiencing any handicap. The difficulty met by a monk who is an old hand lies in this feeling of comfort and clearness in which he stops and stays. Thus, because of his stay in this illusion-city, he does not reach the place of precious things (i.e. the perfect Nirvāṇa). He is fit only for stillness but is unfit for disturbance and his training is, therefore, not completely effective for really full use. In the worst case, the practiser will, when coming into contact with his surroundings, give rise to feelings of like and dislike and of acceptance and rejection, with the result that his false thinking, both coarse and fine, will remain as firm as before. His training will be likened to the soaking of a stone in water and will become ineffective. As time goes on, weariness and laziness will slip into his training which will become fruitless in the end. When such a monk is aware of this, he should immediately give rise to the hua t'ou again and rouse his spirits to take a step forward from the top of a hundred-foot pole (he has reached)[1] until he reaches the top of the highest peak on which he will firmly stand or the bottom of the deepest ocean where he will walk (in every direction). He will cast away (his last link with the unreal) and will walk freely everywhere, meeting

[1] This state of stillness is fully described in Han Shan's 'Song of the Board-bearer' (see Han Shan's Autobiography) and in Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva's 'Complete Enlightenment' when he said: 'Both the hearing and its object came to an end but I did not stay where they ended.' (See Master Hsu Yun's 'Daily Lectures', pages 89 and 92).

face to face (lit. substance to substance, or essence to essence) with Buddhas and Patriarchs. Where is the difficulty? Is this not easy?

Hua t'ou is One-Mind. This One-Mind of yours and mine is neither within nor without nor between the two. It is also within, without and between the two and is like Space which is immutable and is all-embracing. Therefore, the hua t'ou should not be pulled up or pushed down. If it is pulled up, it will cause disturbance, and if it is pushed down, it will cause dullness, and so will be in contradiction with the mind-nature[1] and not in line with the 'mean'.[2] Everybody is afraid of false thinking which he finds difficult to control, but I tell you, dear friends, do not be afraid of false thinking and do not make any effort to control it. You have only to be aware of it but should not cling to it, follow it or push it away. It will suffice to discontinue your thinking and it will leave you alone. Hence, the saying: 'The rise of falsehood should be immediately cognized, and once cognized, it will quit.'

However, in his training, if the practiser can turn this false thinking to his own advantage, he will look into where it arises and will notice that it has no independent nature of its own. At once, he will realize the non-existence of this very thinking and will recover his fundamental mindless nature, followed immediately by the manifestation of his pure self-natured Dharmakāya Buddha which will appear on the spot.

In reality, the real and the false are the same (in nature); the living and the Buddhas are not a dualism; and birth-death and Nirvāṇa as well as enlightenment (bodhi) and distress (kleśa) all belong to our self-mind and self-nature and should not be differentiated, should not be either liked or disliked and should not be either grasped or rejected. This mind is pure and clean and fundamentally is Buddha. Not a single Dharma is required (in the quest of enlightenment). Why so much complication? Ts'an![3]

[1] Mind-nature: immutable mind-body, the existing fundamental pure mind, the all, the Tathāgata-garba.

[2] Mean: between the two extremes.

[3] Ts'an: to inquire, investigate, look into. Usually at the end of a meeting, a master utters this word to urge his disciples to inquire into or ponder over the real meaning.

2

The Ch'an Training

(*From the Hsu Yun Ho Shang Fa Hui*)

MASTER HSU YUN'S DISCOURSE IN THE CH'AN HALL

(DEAR friends,) you have been coming frequently to ask for my instruction and I really feel ashamed (of my incompetence). (Every day) from morning to evening, you have been all hard at work splitting firewood, tilling the fields, moving earth and carrying bricks. In spite of this, you still remember your religious duties; this earnestness of yours does indeed warm the heart of other people. I, Hsu Yun, feel really ashamed of my incompetence in religion and lack of virtue. I am not qualified to give instruction and can only pick up a few sentences left behind by the ancients in reply to your questions.

PRELIMINARIES TO THE METHOD OF TRAINING

There are many kinds of method but I will deal briefly with them.

PREREQUISITES OF THE PERFORMANCE OF RELIGIOUS DUTY

(1) *Firm belief in the (law of) causality*

Whoever one may be, especially if striving to perform one's religious duty, one should believe firmly in the law of causality. If one lacks this belief and does whatever one likes, not only will one fail in the performance of religious duty, but also there will be no escape from this law (of causality) even in the three unhappy ways.[1] An ancient master said: 'If one wishes to know the causes formed in a previous life, one can find them in how one fares in the present life; if one wishes to know the effects in the next life, one can find them in one's deeds in the present life.' He

[1] By going to (*a*) the hell of fire, (*b*) the hell of blood, where the inhabitants devour each other like animals and (*c*) the Asipattra hell of swords, where the leaves and grass are sharp-edged swords.

also said: 'The karma of our deeds will never be wiped out even after hundreds and thousands of aeons (but) as soon as conditions become ripe, we will have to bear the effects ourselves.' The Śūraṅgama Sūtra says: 'If the causal ground is not a true one, the ripening (fruit) will be distorted.' Therefore, when one sows a good cause, one will reap a good fruit (and) when one sows an evil cause, one will reap an evil fruit; when one sows melon (seeds) one will gather melons (and) when one sows beans, one will gather beans. This is the plain truth. As I am talking about the law of causality, I will tell you two stories to illustrate it.

The first story is about the massacre of the Śākya clansmen by the Crystal King (Virūḍhaka).[1] Before the advent of Śākyamuni Buddha, there was near Kapila town a village inhabited by fishermen, and in it was a big pond. It happened that because of a great drought, the pond ran dry and all the fish were caught and eaten by the villagers. The last fish taken was a big one and before it was killed, a boy who never ate fish, played with it and thrice knocked its head. Later, after Śākyamuni Buddha's appearance in this world, King Prasenajit[2] who believed in the Buddha-dharma, married a Śākya girl who then gave birth to a prince called Crystal. When he was young, Crystal had his schooling in Kapila which was then inhabited by the Śākya clansmen. One day, while playing, the boy ascended to the Buddha's seat and was reprimanded by others who dragged him down. The boy cherished a grudge against the men and when he became king, he led his soldiers to attack Kapila, killing all its inhabitants. At the same time, the Buddha suffered from a headache which lasted three days. When His disciples asked Him to rescue the poor inhabitants, the Buddha replied that a fixed Karma could not be changed. By means of his miraculous powers, Maudgalyāyana[3] rescued five hundred Śākya clansmen and thought he could give them refuge in his own bowl which was raised up in the air. When the bowl was brought down, all the men had been turned into blood. When asked by His chief disciples, the Buddha related the story (kung an) of the villagers who in days gone by had killed all the fish (in their pond); King Crystal had been the big fish and his soldiers the other fish in the

[1] This story was related by the Buddha himself.

[2] King of Śrāvastī and a contemporary of the Buddha. He was killed by his son, Virūḍhaka, known as the Crystal King and the Evil Born King, who supplanted him.

[3] Mahā-Maudgalyāyana, or Maudgalaputra, was one of the ten chief disciples of the Buddha, and was specially noted for his miraculous powers; formerly an ascetic, he agreed with Śāriputra that whichever first found the truth would reveal it to the other. Śāriputra found the Buddha and brought Maudgalyāyana to Him; the former is placed on His right, the latter on His left.

pond; the inhabitants of Kapila who were now killed had been those who ate the fish; and the Buddha Himself had been the boy who thrice knocked the head of the big fish. (Karma was) now causing Him to suffer from a headache for three days in retribution for His previous act. Since there could be no escape from the effects of a fixed Karma, the five hundred Śākya clansmen, although rescued by Maudgalyāyana, shared the same fate. Later, King Crystal was reborn in a hell. (As cause produces effect which in turn becomes a new cause) the retribution (theory) is inexhaustible. The law of causality is really very dreadful.

The second story is that of (Ch'an master) Pai Chang who liberated a wild fox.[1] One day, after a Ch'an meeting, although all his disciples had retired, the old master Pai Chang noticed an elderly man who remained behind. Pai Chang asked the man what he was doing and he replied: 'I am not a human being but the spirit of a wild fox. In my previous life, I was the head-monk of this place. One day, a monk asked me, "Does a man practising self-cultivation, still become involved in the (theory of) retribution?" I replied, "No, he is free from the (theory of) retribution." For this (reply) alone, I got involved in retribution and have now been the spirit of a wild fox for five hundred years, and am still unable to get away from it. Will the master be compassionate enough to enlighten me on all this.' Pai Chang said to the old man: 'Ask me the same question (and I will explain it to you).' The man then said to the master: 'I wish to ask the master this: Does one who practises self-cultivation still get involved in the (theory of) retribution?' Pai Chang replied: 'He is not blind to cause and effect.' Thereupon, the old man was greatly awakened; he prostrated himself before the master to thank him and said: 'I am indebted to you for your (appropriate) reply to the question and am now liberated from the fox's body.[2] I live in a (small) grotto on the mountain behind and hope you will grant me the usual rites for a dead monk.' The following day, Pai Chang went to a mountain

[1] This story is recorded in 'The Transmission of the Lamp' (Ching Te Ch'uan Teng Lu) and other Ch'an collections.

[2] In his previous life, the old monk had already succeeded in disentangling his mind from its attachment to the phenomenal. However, he could not get away from Saṁsāra because of the karma of misguiding his former disciple about retribution. In his present transmigration, he had realized a singleness of mind about leaving the world of animals and had thereby acquired the occult power of transforming his fox's body into that of an old man. However, he still clung to the dual view of the existence of ego (subject) and fox (object) and could not free himself from this last bondage. Pai Chang's words had a tremendous effect on the old man, releasing his mind from his doubt about his self-nature which fundamentally was pure and contained neither cause nor effect. Being free from this last bond, his self-nature now returned to normal and could function without further handicap; it could hear the master's voice by means of its function. When function operated normally, its essence manifested itself; hence enlightenment.

behind (his monastery), where in a (small) grotto he probed the ground with his staff and discovered a dead fox for whom the usual funeral rites for a dead monk were held.

(Dear) friends, after listening to these two stories, you will realize that the law of causality is indeed a dreadful (thing). Even after His attainment of Buddhahood, the Buddha still suffered a headache in retribution (for His former act). Retribution is infallible and fixed karma is inescapable. So we should always be heedful of all this and should be very careful about creating (new) causes.

(2) *Strict observance of the rules of discipline (commandments)*

In striving to perform one's religious duty, the first thing is to observe the rules of discipline. For discipline is the fundamental of the Supreme Bodhi; discipline begets immutability and immutability begets wisdom. There is no such thing as self-cultivation without observance of the rules of discipline. The Śūraṅgama Sūtra which lists four kinds of purity, clearly teaches us that cultivation of Samādhi (-mind) without observance of the rules of discipline, will not wipe out the dust (impurities). Even if there be manifestation of much knowledge with dhyāna, this also will cause a fall into (the realm of) māras (evil demons) and heretics. Therefore, we know that observance of the rules of discipline is very important. A man observing them is supported and protected by dragon-kings and devas, and respected and feared by māras and heretics. A man breaking the rules of discipline is called a big robber by the ghosts who make a clean sweep of even his footprints. Formerly, in Kubhāna state (Kashmir), there was nearby a monastery a poisonous dragon which frequently played havoc in the region. (In the monastery) five hundred arhats gathered together but failed to drive away the dragon with their collective power of Dhyāna-samādhi. Later, a monk came (to the monastery) where he did not enter into Dhyāna-samādhi; he merely said to the poisonous dragon: 'Will the wise and virtuous one leave this place and go to some distant one.' Thereupon, the poisonous dragon fled to a distant place. When asked by the arhats what miraculous power he had used to drive away the dragon, the monk replied: 'I did not use the power of Dhyāna-samādhi; I am only very careful about keeping the rules of discipline and I observe a minor one with the same care as a major one.' So, we can see that the collective power of five hundred arhats' Dhyāna-samādhi cannot compare with a monk's strict observance of the rules of discipline.

If you (retort and) ask me (why) the Sixth Patriarch said:

'Why should discipline be observed if the mind is (already) impartial?
Why should straightforward men practise Ch'an?'[1]

I will ask you back this question: 'Is your mind already impartial and straightforward; if the (lady) Ch'ang O came down from the moon[2] with her naked body and embraced you in her arms, would your heart remain undisturbed; and if someone without any reason insults and beats you, will you not give rise to feelings of anger and resentment? Can you refrain from differentiating between enmity and affection, between hate and love, between self and other, and between right and wrong? If you can do all this, then you can open your mouth widely to talk, otherwise it is useless to tell a deliberate lie.'

(3) *A firm faith*

A firm believing mind is the fundamental of one's training for performing one's religious duty, because faith is the mother (or begetter) of the beginning (or source) of right doctrine, and because without faith, no good will derive therefrom. If we want to be liberated from (the round of) births and deaths, we must first have a firm believing mind. The Buddha said that all living beings on earth had (inherent in them) the meritorious Tathāgata wisdom which they could not realize solely because of their false thinking and grasping. He also expounded all kinds of Dharma doors (to enlightenment) to cure (all kinds of) ailments from which living beings suffered. We should, therefore, believe that his words are not false and that all living beings can attain Buddhahood. But why have we failed to attain Buddhahood? It is because we have not gone into training according to the (correct) method. For example, we believe and know that bean curd can be made with soybean but if we do not start making it, soybean cannot turn into bean curd (for us). Now assuming that soybean is used for making bean curd, we shall still fail to make it if we do not know how to mix it with gypsum. If we know the method, we will grind the soybean (put the powder in water), boil it, take out the bean grounds and add a suitable quantity of gypsum powder; thus we will certainly get bean curd. Likewise, in the performance of our religious duty, Buddhahood will be unattainable not only because of lack of training, but also because of training not in conformity with the (correct) method. If our self-cultivation is practised according to the (correct) method, without either backsliding or regret, we are bound to attain Buddhahood.

[1] See 'The Altar Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch,' Chapter III.

[2] The name of a very beautiful lady who, according to a popular tale, stole the elixir of life and fled with it to the moon where she was changed into a frog.

Therefore, we should firmly believe that fundamentally we are Buddhas; we should also firmly believe that self-cultivation performed according to the (correct) method is bound to result in the attainment of Buddhahood. Master Yung Chia said (in his Song of Enlightenment):

> 'When the real is attained, neither ego nor dharma exist,
> And in a moment the avici karma[1] is eradicated.
> If knowingly I lie to deceive living beings, my tongue
> Will be pulled out for aeons uncountable as dust and sand.'[2]

The old master was very compassionate and took this boundless vow to urge those coming after him to develop a firm believing mind.

(4) *Adoption of the method of training*

After one has developed a firm faith, one should choose a Dharma door (to enlightenment) for one's training. One should never change it, and when one's choice has been made, either for repetition of the Buddha's name, or for holding a mantra, or for Ch'an training, one should stick to it for ever without backsliding and regret. If today the method does not prove successful, tomorrow it shall be continued; if this year it does not prove successful, next year it shall be continued; and if in the present lifetime it does not prove successful, it shall be continued in the next life. The old master Kuei Shan said: 'If one practises it in each succeeding reincarnation, the Buddha-stage can be expected.' There are some people who are irresolute in their decisions; today after hearing a learned man praise the repetition of Buddha's name, they decide to repeat it for a couple of days and tomorrow, after hearing another learned man praise Ch'an training, they will try it for another two days. If they like to play in this manner, they will go on doing so until their death without succeeding in getting any result. Is it not a pity?

METHOD OF CH'AN TRAINING

Although there are many Dharma doors (to enlightenment), the Buddha, Patriarchs and Ancestors[3] were agreed that the Ch'an training was the unsurpassed wonderful door. In the Śūraṅgama assembly, the Buddha ordered Mañjuśrī to choose between the (various modes of)

[1] Avīci is the last and deepest of the eight hells, where the culprits suffer, die, and are instantly reborn to suffering without interruption.

[2] As punishment for verbal sins.

[3] The Patriarchs are the six Patriarchs of China. The Ancestors are the great Ch'an Masters who came after the Patriarchs. Hsu Yun is now called an Ancestor.

complete enlightenment, and (he chose) Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva's (method) of using the faculty of hearing, as the best. When we turn back the hearing to hear our self-nature, this is (one of the methods of) Ch'an training. This place is a Ch'an hall in which we should discuss this Ch'an training.

ESSENTIALS OF CH'AN TRAINING

Our daily activities are performed within the truth itself. Is there a place that is not a Bodhimaṇḍala?[1] Fundamentally a Ch'an hall is out of place; moreover Ch'an does not mean sitting (in meditation). The so-called Ch'an hall and the so-called Ch'an sitting are only provided for people (who encounter) insurmountable obstructions (of their own) and who are of shallow wisdom in this period of decadence (of the Dharma).

When one sits in this training, one's body and mind should be well controlled. If they are not well controlled a small harm will be illness and a great harm will be entanglement with the demon, which is most regrettable. In the Ch'an hall, when incense sticks are burned for your walking or sitting, the aim is to ensure the control of body and mind. Besides this, there are many ways to control body and mind, but I will deal briefly with the essential ones.

When sitting in Ch'an meditation, the correct position is the natural one. The waist should not be pushed forward, for to do so is to pull upward the inner heat with the result that after the sitting, there will be tears, bad breath, uneasy respiration, loss of appetite and even vomiting of blood. Neither should the waist be drawn backward with dropped head, for this can easily cause dullness. As soon as dullness is felt, the meditator should open his eyes wide, pull up his waist and gently shake his buttocks, and dullness will disappear automatically.

If the training is undergone in hot haste, one will feel a certain annoying dryness in the chest. In this case, it will be advisable to stop the training for the time a half-inch of the incense stick takes to burn, and resume when one feels at ease again. If one does not proceed in this manner, one will, as time goes on, develop a hot and excitable character, and in the worst case, one may thereby become insane or get entangled with demons.

When the Ch'an sitting (in meditation) becomes effective, there will be (mental) states which are too many to enumerate, but if you do not cling to them, they will not hinder you. This is just what the proverb

[1] Bodhimaṇḍala: truth-plot, holy site, place of enlightenment.

says: 'Don't wonder at the wonderful and the wonderful will be in full retreat.' Even if you see evil spirits of all kinds coming to disturb you, you should take no notice of them and you should not be afraid of them. Even if Śākyamuni Buddha comes to lay His hand on your head[1] and prophesies (your future Buddhahood) you should not take any notice of all this and should not be delighted by it. The Śūraṅgama Sutra says: 'A perfect state is that in which the mind is undisturbed by the saintly; an interpretation of the saintly is entanglement with all demons.'

HOW TO BEGIN THE TRAINING: DISTINCTION BETWEEN HOST AND GUEST

How should one start the (Ch'an) training? In the Śūraṅgama assembly, Ārya Ājñātakauṇḍinya talked about the two words 'Foreign Dust'[2] and this is just where we should begin our training. He said: 'For instance, a traveller stops at an inn where he passes the night or takes his meal, and as soon as he has done so, he packs and continues his journey, because he has no time to stay longer. As for the host (of the inn), he has nowhere to go. My deduction is that the one who does not stay is the guest and the one who does stay is the host. Therefore, a thing is foreign when it does not stay. Again in a clear sky, when the sun rises and sunlight enters (the house) through an opening, the dust is seen moving in the ray of light whereas the empty space is unmoving. Therefore, that which is still is voidness and that which moves is dust.'

Foreign dust illustrates false thinking and voidness illustrates self-nature, that is the permanent host who does not follow the guest in the latter's coming and going. This serves to illustrate the eternal (unmoving) self-nature which does not follow false thinking in its sudden rise and fall. Therefore, it is said: 'If one is unmindful of all things, one will meet with no inconvenience when surrounded by all things.' By dust which moves of itself and does not inconvenience voidness which is clearly still, one means that false thinking rises and falls by itself and does not hinder the self-nature which is immutable in its Bhūtatathatā (suchness, thatness) condition. This is the meaning of the saying: 'If the mind does not arise, all things are blameless.'

[1] A custom of Buddha in teaching His disciples, from which the burning of spots on the head of a monk is said to have originated. The eventual vision of the Buddha is merely an impure creation of the deluded mind and does not really represent Him in His Dharmakāya which is inconceivable. Many meditators mistake such visions for the real and become involved with demons. (See Śūraṅgama Sūtra.)

[2] See Master Hsu Yun's 'Daily Discourses', page 94.

(The meaning of) the above word 'foreign' is coarse and (that of) 'dust' is fine. Beginners should clearly understand (the difference between) 'host' and 'guest' and will thus not be 'drifted about' by false thinking. By advancing further, they will be clear about 'voidness' and 'dust' and thus will experience no inconvenience from false thinking. It is said: 'When (false thinking) is known, there will be no harm.' If you inquire carefully into and understand all this, over half of what the training means will become quite clear to you.

HUA T'OU AND DOUBT

In ancient times, the Patriarchs and Ancestors directly pointed at the mind for realization of self-nature and attainment of Buddhahood. Like Bodhidharma who 'quietened the mind' and the Sixth Patriarch who only talked about 'perception of self-nature', all of them just advocated the outright cognizance (of it) without any more ado. They did not advocate looking into a hua t'ou, but later they discovered that men were becoming unreliable, were not of dogged determination, indulged in playing tricks and boasted of their possession of precious gems which really belonged to others. For this reason, these ancestors were compelled to set up their own sects, each with its own devices; hence, the hua t'ou technique.

There are many hua t'ous, such as: 'All things are returnable to One, to what is (that) One returnable?'[1] 'Before you were born, what was your real face?'[2] but the hua t'ou: 'Who is repeating Buddha's name?' is widely in use (today).

What is hua t'ou? (lit. word-head). Word is the spoken word and head is that which precedes word. For instance, when one says 'Amitābha-Buddha', this is a word. Before it is said it is a hua t'ou (or ante-word). That which is called a hua t'ou is the moment before a thought arises. As soon as a thought arises, it becomes a hua wei (lit. word-tail). The moment before a thought arises is called 'the un-born'. That void which is neither disturbed nor dull, and neither still nor (one-sided) is called 'the unending'. The unremitting turning of the light inwards on oneself, instant after instant, and exclusive of all other things, is called 'looking into the hua t'ou' or 'taking care of the hua t'ou'.

[1] All things are returnable to One-mind, to what is One-mind returnable?

[2] This hua t'ou is sometimes wrongly translated in the West as: Before your parents *were born*, what was your *original* face? There are two errors here. The first is probably due to the wrong interpretation of the Chinese character 'sheng', which means 'born' or 'to give birth'. Then 'original' is wrong because it suggests creation or a beginning. The self-nature has no beginning, being outside time. The correct rendering is: Before your parents gave birth to you, what was your fundamental face?'

When one looks into a hua t'ou, the most important thing is to give rise to a doubt. Doubt is the crutch of hua t'ou.[1] For instance, when one is asked: 'Who is repeating Buddha's name?' everybody knows that he himself repeats it, but is it repeated by the mouth or by the mind? If the mouth repeats it, why does not it do so when one sleeps? If the mind repeats it, what does the mind look like? As mind is intangible, one is not clear about it. Consequently some slight feeling of doubt arises about 'WHO'. This doubt should not be coarse; the finer it is, the better. At all times and in all places, this doubt alone should be looked into unremittingly, like an ever-flowing stream, without giving rise to a second thought. If this doubt persists, do not try to shake it; if it ceases to exist, one should gently give rise to it again. Beginners will find the hua t'ou more effective in some still place than amidst disturbance. However, one should not give rise to a discriminating mind; one should remain indifferent to either the effectiveness or ineffectiveness (of the hua t'ou) and one should take no notice of either stillness or disturbance. Thus, one should work at the training with singleness of mind.

(In the hua t'ou): 'Who is repeating the Buddha's name?' emphasis should be laid upon the word 'Who', the other words serving only to give a general idea of the whole sentence. For instance (in the questions): 'Who is wearing this robe and eating rice?', 'Who is going to stool and is urinating?', 'Who is putting an end to ignorance?', and 'Who is able to know and feel?', as soon as one lays emphasis upon (the word) 'Who', while one is walking or standing, sitting or reclining, one will be able to give rise to a doubt without difficulty and without having to use one's faculty of thought to think and discriminate. Consequently the word 'Who' of the hua t'ou is a wonderful technique in Ch'an training. However, one should not repeat the word 'Who' or the sentence 'Who is repeating the Buddha's name?' like (adherents of the Pure Land School) who repeat the Buddha's name. Neither should one set one's thinking and discriminating mind on searching for him who repeats the Buddha's name. There are some people who unremittingly repeat the sentence: 'Who is repeating the Buddha's name?'; it would be far better merely to repeat Amitābha Buddha's name (as do followers of the Pure Land School) for this will give greater merits. There are others who indulge in thinking of a lot of things and seek after everything here and there, and call this the rising of a doubt; they do not know that the more they think, the more their false thinking will increase, just like someone who wants to ascend but is really descending. You should know all this.

[1] Doubt is as indispensable to hua t'ou as crutches are to the cripples.

Usually beginners give rise to a doubt which is very coarse; it is apt to stop abruptly and to continue again, and seems suddenly familiar and suddenly unfamiliar. This is (certainly) not doubt and can only be their thinking (process). When the mad (wandering) mind has gradually been brought under control, one will be able to apply the brake on the thinking process, and only then can this be called 'looking into' (a hua t'ou). Furthermore, little by little, one will gain experience in the training and then, there will be no need to give rise to the doubt which will rise of itself automatically. In reality, at the beginning, there is no effective training at all as there is only (an effort) to put an end to false thinking. When real doubt rises of itself, this can be called true training. This is the moment when one reaches a 'strategic gateway' where it is easy to go out of one's way (as follows).

Firstly, there is the moment when one will experience utter purity and boundless ease[1] and if one fails to be aware of and look into the same, one will slip into a state of dullness. If a learned teacher is present, he will immediately see clearly that the student is in such a state and will strike the meditator with the (usual) flat stick, thus clearing away the confusing dullness; a great many are thereby awakened to the truth.[2]

Secondly, when the state of purity and emptiness appears, if the doubt ceases to exist, this is the unrecordable state[3] in which the meditator is likened to one sitting on a withered tree in a grotto, or to soaking stones with water.[4] When one reaches this state, one should arouse (the doubt) to be immediately followed by one's awareness and contemplation (of this state). Awareness (of this state) is freedom from illusion; this is wisdom. Contemplation (of this state) wipes out confusion; this is imperturbability. This singleness of mind will be thoroughly still and

[1] Lit. utter purity and extreme lightness. When the meditator succeeds in putting an end to all his thoughts, he will step into 'the stream' or correct concentration in which his body and its weight seem to disappear completely and to give way to a bright purity which is as light as air; he will feel as if he is about to be levitated.

[2] Lit. thus clearing away the fog that darkens the sky. As soon as the confusing dullness is cleared away, the self-nature, now free from hindrance, is able to function normally and will actually receive the beating, hence enlightenment.

[3] Avyākṛta or Avyākhyāta, in Sanskrit; unrecordable, either as good or bad; neutral, neither good nor bad, things that are innocent and cannot be classified under moral categories.

[4] When the mind is disentangled from the sense-organs, sense-data and consciousness, one reaches a state described as: 'holding fast to the top of a pole', or 'silent immersion in stagnant water' or 'sitting on the clean white ground'. (See Han Shan's 'Song of the Board-bearer'.) One should take a step forward in order to get out of this state called 'a life', the fourth of the four lakṣaṇas (of an ego, a personality, a being and a life) mentioned in the Diamond Sūtra, otherwise the result one will achieve is no better than 'soaking stones with water' which never penetrates stones. If from the top of a hundred-foot pole one takes a step forward, one will reach the top of a high peak from which one will release one's last hold and leap over the phenomenal.

shining, in its imperturbable absoluteness, spiritual clearness and thorough understanding, like the continuous smoke of a solitary fire. When one reaches this stage, one should be provided with a diamond eye[1] and should refrain from giving rise to anything else, as if one does, one will (simply) add another head upon one's head.[2]

Formerly, when a monk asked (Master) Chao Chou: 'What should one do when there is not a thing to bring with self?' Chao Chou replied: 'Lay it down.' The monk said: 'What shall I lay down when I do not bring a thing with me?' Chao Chou replied: 'If you cannot lay it down, carry it away.'[3] This is exactly the stage (above mentioned) which is like that of a drinker of water who alone knows whether it is cold or warm. This cannot be expressed in words and speeches, and one who reaches this stage will clearly know it. As to one who has not reached it, it will be useless to tell him about it. This is what the (following) lines mean:

> 'When you meet a fencing master, show to him your sword.
> Do not give your poem to a man who's not a poet.'[4]

TAKING CARE OF A HUA T'OU AND TURNING INWARD THE HEARING TO HEAR THE SELF-NATURE

Someone may ask: 'How can Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva's "method of turning inward the hearing to hear the self-nature" be regarded as

[1] Diamond eye: indestructible eye of Wisdom.

[2] A superfluous and unnecessary thing that will obstruct the training.

[3] The monk became thoroughly awakened after hearing Chao Chou's reply. His first question means: 'What should one do when one becomes disentangled from sense-organs, sense-data and consciousnesses?' He did not know that he was still entangled with this awareness of ego and preservation of ego. (See Han Shan's commentary on The Diamond Cutter of Doubts). Chao Chou's reply 'Lay it down' means: 'Lay down even the thought you are still burdened with, for this very thought of not carrying a thing with you holds you in bondage.' The monk argued: 'As I do not carry a single thing with me, what shall I lay down?' Chao Chou replied: 'If you really have got rid of all your false thinking, there will only remain your self-nature which is pure and clean and which you should carry away with you, because you cannot get rid of it.' The monk, now released from his awareness of ego or last bondage, realized that only his self-nature remained which was free from all impediments and which he could not get rid of, for Chao Chou told him to carry it away. It was this very self-nature of his, now pure and clean, which actually heard the master's voice, hence his enlightenment.

[4] These two lines come from Lin Chi (Rinzai in Japanese) whose idea was that one could talk about enlightenment with an enlightened person and that it was useless to do so when meeting a deluded man, for the truth was inexpressible and could only be realized after rigorous training. The first line 'When you meet a fencing master, show to him your sword' was illustrated when Han Shan met Ta Kuan and sat cross-legged face to face with him for forty days and nights without sleeping. (See Han Shan's Autobiography). The second line 'Do not give your poem to a man who's not a poet' was proved by the Sixth Patriarch, who urged his disciples not to discuss the Supreme Vehicle with those who were not of the same sect, but to bring their palms together to salute them and make them happy. (See *The Altar Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*.)

Ch'an training?' I have just talked about looking into the hua t'ou; it means that you should unremittingly and one-pointedly turn the light inwards on 'that which is not born and does not die' which is the hua t'ou. To turn inwards one's hearing to hear the self-nature means also that you should unremittingly and one-pointedly turn inwards your (faculty of) hearing to hear the self-nature. 'To turn inwards' is 'to turn back'. 'That which is not born and does not die' is nothing but the self-nature. When hearing and looking follow sound and form in the worldly stream, hearing does not go beyond sound and looking does not go beyond form (appearance), with the obvious differentiation. However, when going against the mundane stream, the meditation is turned inwards to contemplate the self-nature. When 'hearing' and 'looking' are no longer in pursuit of sound and appearance, they become fundamentally pure and enlightening and do not differ from each other. We should know that what we call 'looking into the hua t'ou' and 'turning inwards the hearing to hear the self-nature' cannot be effected by means of the eye to look or the ear to hear. If eye and ear are so used, there will be pursuit after sound and form with the result that one will be turned by things (i.e. externals); this is called 'surrender to the (mundane) stream'.[1] If there is singleness of thought abiding in that 'which is not born and does not die', without pursuing sound and form, this is 'going against the stream'; this is called 'looking into the hua t'ou' or 'turning inwards the hearing to hear the self-nature'.

EARNESTNESS ABOUT LEAVING SAṂSĀRA[2] AND DEVELOPING A LONG ENDURING MIND

In the Ch'an training, one should be in earnest in one's desire to leave the realm of birth and death, and develop a long enduring mind (in one's striving). If the mind is not earnest it will be impossible to give rise to the doubt, and the striving will be ineffective. Lack of a long enduring mind will result in laziness and the training will not be continuous. Just develop a long enduring mind and the doubt will rise of itself. When doubt rises trouble (kleśa) will come to an end of itself. As the ripe moment comes (it will be like) running water which will form a channel.[3]

I will now tell you a story I personally witnessed. In the year K'eng

[1] i.e. to accord with the world, its ways and customs; to die.
[2] Realm of birth and death.
[3] i.e. success is bound to follow.

Tsu (1900), when eight world powers sent their expeditionary forces to Peking (after the Boxer rebellion), I followed Emperor Kuang Hsu and Empress-Dowager Tz'u Hsi when they fled from the capital. We had to hurry towards Shen Hsi (Shensi) province; each day we walked several tens of miles, and for several days we had no rice to eat. On the road, a peasant offered some creepers of sweet potato[1] to the (hungry) emperor, who found them savoury and asked the man what they were. You can imagine that when the emperor who used to put on airs and had an awe-inspiring reputation, had to run some distance he became very hungry. When he ate creepers of sweet potato, he gave up all his airs and awe-inspiring attitude. Why did he walk on foot, become hungry and lay down everything? Because the allied forces wanted his life and he had only one thought, that of running for his life. Later, when peace had been concluded, he returned to the capital, putting on once more his airs with his awe-inspiring reputation. Again he would no longer walk in the street and did not feel hungry. If he did not find some food savoury, once more he could not swallow it. Why was he (again) unable to lay down everything now? Because the allied forces no longer wanted his life and because his mind was not set on escaping. If he now applied the same mind (previously) set on running for his life to perform his religious duty, was there anything he could not do? This was due to the fact that he did not have a long enduring mind, and as soon as favourable conditions prevailed, his former habits appeared again.

Dear friends, the murderous demon of impermanence is constantly looking for our lives and will never agree to conclude peace with us! Let us hastily develop a long enduring mind to get out of birth and death. Master Yuan Miao of Kao Feng said: 'If one sets a time limit for success in the Ch'an training, one should act like a man who has fallen to the bottom of a pit one thousand chang deep.[2] His thousand and ten-thousand thoughts are reduced to a single idea on how to escape from the pit. He keeps it up from morning to evening and from evening (to the following) morning, and has no other thought. If he trains in this way and does not realize the truth in three, five or seven days, I shall be guilty of a verbal sin for which I shall fall into the hell where tongues are pulled out.' The old master was earnest in his great mercy and being apprehensive that we would not develop a long enduring mind, he took this great vow to guarantee (our successes).

[1] In China, only starving people eat creepers of sweet potato which is used as food for pigs.

[2] Chang: a measure of ten Chinese feet.

DIFFICULTY AND EASINESS IN CH'AN TRAINING

There is difficulty and easiness in the Ch'an training, both for beginners and for old practisers.

DIFFICULTY FOR BEGINNERS: THE REMISS MIND 25

The most common defects of a beginner lie in his inability to lay down his habits of false thinking; of (self-indulgence in) ignorance caused by pride and jealousy; of (self-inflicted) obstructions caused by concupiscence, anger, stupidity and love; of laziness and gluttony; and of (attachment to) right and wrong, to selfness and otherness. With a belly (breast) filled with all the above (defects), how can he be responsive to the truth? Others are young gentlemen[1] who are unable to get rid of their habits and are incapable of the least condescension and of enduring the smallest trouble; how can they undergo the training in performance of their religious duties? They never think of our original teacher, Sakyamuni Buddha, and of His standing when He left home. Some people who know a little literature, use their knowledge of it to interpret the ancients' sayings, boast of their unequalled abilities and regard themselves as superiors.[2] When seriously ill, they cannot bear their sufferings with patience. When they are about to die, they lose their heads and realize that their usual knowledge is useless. Thus their repentance will be tardy.

Some are serious in their religious duties but do not know where to begin their training. Others are afraid of false thinking and are unable to put an end to it. So they worry about it all day long and blame their karmic obstructions for it, thus falling away in their religious enthusiasm. Some want to resist false thinking to the death by angrily clenching their fists to keep up their spirits and by thrusting out their chests and widely opening their eyes as if there is really something very important to do. They want to fight to a finish against their false thinking; not only will they fail to drive it away but they will thereby vomit blood or become insane. There are people who are afraid of falling into voidness but they do not know they are thus giving rise to the 'demon'. Consequently, they can neither wipe out voidness nor attain awakening. There are those who set their minds on the quest of awakening and who do not know that to seek awakening and to desire Buddhahood are nothing but a great falsehood; they do not know that gravel cannot be turned into

[1] Literally 'sons of officials'; equivalent of the French term 'fils à papa'.
[2] One of the ten wrong views.

rice and they will thus wait until the year of the donkey for their awakening.[1]

There are (also) those who can manage to sit (in meditation) during the time one or two incense sticks take to burn and thereby experience some joy, but this is only likened to the blind black tortoise which stretched its head through the hole of a floating log.[2] It is just a rare chance and not (the result of) true training. Moreover, the demon of joy has already slipped into their minds. There are cases of the enjoyable state of purity and cleanness realizable in stillness but not realizable in disturbance and for this reason meditators avoid disturbing conditions and look for quiet places. They do not realize that they have already agreed to become servants of the demon of both stillness and disturbance.[3]

There are many cases like the above. It is really difficult for beginners to know the correct method of training; awareness without contemplation will lead to confusion and instability, and contemplation without awareness will result in immersion in stagnant water.

EASINESS FOR BEGINNERS: LAYING DOWN OF (THE BURDEN OF) THINKING AND GIVING RISE TO A SINGLE THOUGHT

Although the training seems difficult, it becomes very easy once its method is known. Where does easiness lie for beginners? There is nothing ingenious in it because it lies in 'laying down'. Laying down what? (The burden of) distress (kleśa) caused by ignorance. How does one lay it down? You have all been at the bedside of a dead man. If you try to scold him a few times, he will not be excited. If you give him a few strokes of the staff he will not strike back. Formerly he indulged in ignorance but now he cannot do so any more. Formerly he longed for reputation and wealth but now he no longer wants it. Formerly he was contaminated by habits but now he is free from them. Now he does not make distinctions and lays down everything. Dear friends, please look at

[1] Animals and birds were chosen by the ancients as symbols for lunar years, such as a rat, buffalo, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, chicken, dog and pig. As a donkey was not one of them, the year of the donkey can never come round, i.e. these people can never attain enlightenment.

[2] The Saṁyuktāgama Sūtra says: 'There was a blind tortoise countless aeons old which stretched out its head once every century. There was a log with a hole through it, floating in the sea and tossed about by high waves raised by winds of gale force. The tortoise stretched its head through the hole. . . .' This shows the rareness of the chance as compared with the difficulty of the blind black tortoise succeeding in putting its head through the hole in the floating log.

[3] i.e. differentiation between stillness and disturbance.

all this. When we have breathed our last, this physical body of ours will become a corpse. Because we cherish this body, we are unable to lay down everything, with the resultant creation of self and other, right and wrong, like and dislike, and acceptance and rejection. If we only regard this body as a corpse, we will not cherish it and will certainly not consider it as ours. (If so) is there anything we cannot lay down?

We only have to lay down everything, day and night, no matter whether we walk, stand, sit or recline, in the midst of either stillness or disturbance, and whether busy or not; throughout our bodies, within and without, there should be only a doubt, a uniform, harmonizing and continuous doubt, unmixed with any other thought, in other words, a hua t'ou which is likened to a long sword leaning against the sky, which we will use to cut down a demon or Buddha should either appear. Thus we will not fear false thinking; who then will disturb us; who will distinguish between disturbance and stillness and who will cling to existence and non-existence? If there be fear of false thinking, this fear will increase false thinking. If there be awareness of purity, this purity will immediately be impure. If there be fear of falling into non-existence, there will immediately be a fall into existence. If there be desire to attain Buddhahood, there will immediately be a fall into the way of demons. (For this reason) it is said: 'The carrying of water and fetching of firewood are nothing but the wonderful Truth. The hoeing of fields and the cultivation of soil are entirely Ch'an potentialities.' This does not mean that only the crossing of legs for sitting in meditation can be regarded as Ch'an training in the performance of one's religious duty.

DIFFICULTY FOR OLD PRACTISERS: INABILITY TO TAKE A STEP FORWARD AFTER REACHING THE TOP OF A HUNDRED-FOOT POLE

Where does difficulty lie for an old practiser? In his training, when his doubt has become genuinely real, his awareness and contemplation are still linked with the (realm) of birth and death, and lack of awareness and contemplation is (the cause of) his fall into (the realm of) non-existence. It is already difficult to reach these stages, but there are many who are unable to get beyond them, and are content to stand on the top of a hundred-foot pole without knowing how to take a step forward. Others who, after reaching these stages, are able to achieve in the stillness some wisdom which enables them to understand a few kung ans left behind by the ancients; they also lay down the doubt, thinking they have attained a thorough awakening, and compose poems and gāthās, twinkle their

eyes and raise their eyebrows, calling themselves enlightened; they do not know that they are servants of the demon.[1]

There are also those who misunderstand the meaning of Bodhidharma's (words:)

'Put an end to the formation of all causes without, and have no panting heart within; then with a mind like a wall,[2] you will be able to enter the Truth.'

and the Sixth Patriarch's (words:)

'Do not think of either good or evil; at this very instant, what is the Venerable Hui Ming's real face?'[3]

They think that sitting with crossed legs like withered logs in a grotto is the best pattern. These people mistake an illusion-city for a place of precious things,[4] and take a foreign land for their native village. The story of the old lady burning the hut serves to scold these (logs of) dead wood.[5]

EASINESS FOR OLD PRACTISERS: CONTINUATION OF CLOSE AND UNINTERRUPTED CH'AN TRAINING

Where does easiness lie for old practisers? It lies only in the absence of self-satisfaction and the continuation of the close and uninterrupted (Ch'an) training; the closeness should be much closer, the continuance much more continuous and the subtleness much more subtle. When the ripe moment comes, the bottom of the barrel will drop off of itself;[6] otherwise one will have to call on enlightened masters who will help one to pull out (the remaining) nail or stake (of obstruction).

[1] Ancient masters used to twinkle their eyes and raise their eyebrows to reveal the self-mind to their disciples. In the above text, those who have only made some progress but are still unenlightened, ape the ancients to prove their attainment of the truth.

[2] When the mind is like a wall, it will remain indifferent to all externals.

[3] See *The Altar Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*.

[4] Quotation from the Lotus Sūtra in which the Buddha urged His disciples not to stay in the illusion-city or incomplete Nirvāṇa but to strive to reach the Perfect Nirvāṇa.

[5] An old lady supported a Ch'an monk for twenty years and used to send every day a sixteen-year-old girl to bring him food and offerings. One day, the old lady ordered the girl to ask him this question: 'How is "it" at this very moment?' The monk replied:

'A withered log in a cold cave
After three winters has no warmth'.

The girl gave the monk's reply to the old lady who said: 'I have been making offerings to one who can prove only that he is a worldly fellow.' Thereupon, she sent him away and set fire to the hut. (See *The Imperial Selection of Ch'an Sayings*). The monk reached only the top of a hundred-foot pole but refused to take a step forward. As he was only dead wood, the old lady was angry, sent him away and destroyed the hut.

[6] i.e. the bottom of the barrel full of black lacquer, or ignorance; when it drops off, the barrel will be emptied of lacquer and enlightenment will be attained.

Master Han Shan's Song is:[1]

High on a mountain peak[2]
Only boundless space is seen.[3]
How to sit in meditation, no one knows.[4]
The solitary moon shines o'er the icy pool,[5]
But in the pool there is no moon;[6]
The moon is in the night-blue sky.[7]
This song is chanted now,
(But) there's no Ch'an in the song.[8]

The first two lines show that that which is truly eternal is solitary and does not belong to anything else, and that it shines brightly over the world without encountering any obstruction. The following (third) line shows the wonderful body of Bhūtatathatā[9] which worldly men do not know and which cannot be located[10] (even) by all Buddhas of the three times; hence the three words: 'no one knows'. The next three (fourth, fifth and sixth) lines show the old master's expedient expounding of this state. The last two lines (seventh and eighth) give a special warning to all of us, lest we mistake the finger for the moon,[11] that is none of these words are Ch'an.[12]

[1] Han Shan (Cold Mountain) should not be confounded with Han Shan (Silly Mountain) whose autobiography has been translated by me into English.

[2] The high purpose of one desirous of escaping from mortality.

[3] The magnitude of his high aim.

[4] Worldly men turn their backs on the transcendental which they do not know.

[5] The solitary moon symbolizes enlightenment which is independent of the phenomenal and is the absolute which does not brook interference from any quarter. The pool is a symbol of the self-nature which avoids all worldly things and is disentangled from them. The line means the attainment of enlightenment by self-nature.

[6] The self-nature is fundamentally pure and clean and does not gain anything, even the moon, symbol of enlightenment, when it is awakened, or lose anything, when it is under delusion. If there be a moon, or enlightenment in it, it will not be absolute and will not be pure and clean.

[7] The enlightened self-nature neither comes nor goes for it is immutable and pervades everywhere in the Dharmadhātu, symbolized by the blue sky which is pure and clean.

[8] The song is chanted in praise of that which is pure and clean and does not contain an atom of Ch'an, because Ch'an is only an empty name with no real nature.

[9] Bhūtatathatā: the real, thus always, or eternally so; i.e. reality as contrasted with unreality, or appearance, and the unchanging or immutable as contrasted with form and phenomena. Bhūta is substance, that which exists; tathatā is suchness, thusness, i.e. such is its nature.

[10] If it can be located anywhere, it will not be the absolute and will not be all-embracing.

[11] When a finger points towards the moon, wise men look at the moon whereas the ignorant look at the finger and do not see the moon, or the truth. This parable was used by the Buddha when teaching His disciples.

[12] Readers will notice that footnotes (2) to (8) on this page seem somewhat different from Master Hsu Yun's commentary on the song, and will realize that Han Shan's poem was excellent in that it can be interpretated either 'perpendicularly' or 'horizontally' as the learned ancients put it, provided there be no deviation from its main purport. My footnotes describe a student striving to achieve enlightenment whereas my master Hsu Yun describes the state of an enlightened master. Gāthās and poems chanted by the ancients are like a prism or spectrum of multi-levelled meanings, as Mr. I. Groupp, an American Buddhist of New York, ably puts it.

My talk is like a heap of things and is also (like what we call) the drag of creepers[1] and an interfering interruption (because) wherever there are words and speeches, there is no real meaning.[2] When the ancient masters received their students, either they used their staffs (to beat them) or they shouted (to wake them up)[3] and there were not so many complications. However, the present cannot be compared with the past, and it is, therefore, imperative to point a finger at the moon.[4] Dear friends, please look into all this; after all, who is pointing his finger and who is looking at the moon?[5]

[1] Creepers: unnecessary things which do not concern the real.

[2] Words and speeches cannot express the inexpressible. Real meaning is the reality which cannot be described and expressed.

[3] Beating and shouting are to reveal the master's self-nature which beats and shouts and the student's self-nature which is beaten and hears the shout. Thus beating and shouting are in accord with Bodhidharma's direct pointing at the self-mind for realization of the self-nature for attainment of Buddhahood.

[4] The finger is an expediency used to reveal the moon, or enlightened self-nature, but one should not cling to the finger and overlook the moon which is pointed at.

[5] One who points at the moon and one who looks at the moon are the self-mind of the master and the self-mind of the student respectively, again a direct pointing at the self-mind for realization of self-nature and attainment of Buddhahood, as taught by Bodhidharma.

3

Daily Lectures at Two Ch'an Weeks

given at the Jade Buddha Monastery, Shanghai, in 1953

(from the Hsu Yun Ho Shang Nien P'u)

THE FIRST WEEK

The First Day 31

THE Venerable Wei Fang, abbot (of this monastery), is very compassionate indeed, and the chief monks are also earnest in their efforts to spread the Dharma. In addition, all the laymen (upāsakas) here are keen in their studies of the truth and have come to sit in meditation during this Ch'an week. All have asked me to preside over the meeting and this is really an unsurpassable (co-operating) cause. However, for the last few years, I have been ill and am, therefore, unable to give long lectures.

The World Honoured One spent over forty years in expounding the Dharma, exoterically and esoterically, and his teaching is found in the twelve divisions[1] of the Mahāyāna canon in the Tripiṭaka. If I am asked to give lectures, the most I can do is to pick up words already spoken by the Buddha and Masters.

As to the Dharma of our sect, when the Buddha ascended to his seat for the last time, he held up and showed to the assembly a golden flower of sandalwood, offered to him by the king of the eighteen Brahmalokas (Mahābrahmā Devarāja). All men and gods (devas) who were present, did not understand the Buddha's (meaning). Only Mahākāśyapa (acknowledged it with a) broad smile. Thereupon the World Honoured One declared to him: 'I have the treasure of the correct Dharma eye, Nirvāṇa's wonderful mind and the formless Reality which I now transmit to you.'

[1] The 12 divisions of the Mahāyāna canon are: (1) sūtra, the Buddha's sermons; (2) geya, metrical pieces; (3) gāthā, poems or chants; (4) nidāna, sūtras written by request or in answer to a query, because certain percepts were violated and because of certain events; (5) itivṛttaka, narratives; (6) jātaka, stories of former lives of Buddha; (7) adbhuta-dharma, miracles; (8) avadāna, parables, metaphors, stories, illustrations; (9) upadeśa, discourses and discussions by question and answer; (10) udāna, impromptu, or unsolicited addresses; (11) vaipulya, expanded sūtras; (12) vyākaraṇa, prophecies.

This was the transmission outside of teaching, which did not make use of scriptures and was the unsurpassed Dharma door of direct realization.

Those who came afterwards, got confused about it and (wrongly) called it Ch'an (Dhyāna in Sanskrit and Zen in Japanese). We should know that over twenty kinds of Ch'an are enumerated in the Mahāprajñā-pāramitā Sūtra, but none of them is the final one.

The Ch'an of our sect does not set up (progressive) stages and is, therefore, the unsurpassed one. (Its aim) is the direct realization leading to the perception of the (self-) nature and attainment of Buddhahood. Therefore, it has nothing to do with the sitting or not sitting in meditation during a Ch'an week. However, on account of living beings' dull roots and due to their numerous false thoughts, ancient masters devised expediencies to guide them. Since the time of Mahākāśyapa up to now, there have been sixty to seventy generations. In the Tang and Sung dynasties (619–1278), the Ch'an sect spread to every part of the country and how it prospered at the time! At present, it has reached the bottom of its decadence (and) only those monasteries like Chin Shan, Kao Min and Pao Kuan, can still manage to present some appearance. This is why men of outstanding ability are now so rarely found and even the holding of Ch'an weeks has only a name but lacks its spirit.

When the Seventh Ancestor[1] Hsing Szu of Ch'ing Yuan Mountain asked the Sixth Patriarch: 'What should one do in order not to fall into the progressive stages?'[2] the Patriarch asked: 'What did you practise of late?' Hsing Szu replied: 'I did not even practise the Noble Truths.'[3] The Patriarch asked: 'Then falling into what progressive stages?' Hsing Szu replied: 'Even the Noble Truths are not practised, where are the progressive stages?' The Sixth Patriarch had a high opinion of Hsing Szu.

Because of our inferior roots, the great masters were obliged to use expediencies and to instruct their followers to hold (and examine into) a sentence called hua t'ou. As Buddhists (of the Pure Land School) who used to repeat the Buddha's name (in their practice) were numerous, the great masters instructed them to hold (and examine into the hua t'ou): 'Who is the repeater of the Buddha's name?' Nowadays, this expedient is adopted in Ch'an training all over the country. However, many are

[1] Hsing Szu inherited the Dharma from the Sixth Patriarch and was called the Seventh Ancestor because his two Dharma-descendants Tung Shan and Ts'ao Shan founded the Ts'ao Tung sect, which was one of the five Ch'an sects in China.

[2] Of the method of gradual enlightenment which took many aeons to enable an adherent to attain the Buddha-stage.

[3] The four Noble Truths are: Misery; the accumulation of misery, caused by passions; the extinction of passions, being possible; and the doctrine of the Path leading to extinction of passions.

not clear about it and merely repeat without interruption the sentence: 'Who is the repeater of the Buddha's name?' Thus they are repeaters of the hua t'ou, and are not investigators of the hua t'ou ('s meaning). To investigate is to inquire into. For this reason, the four Chinese characters 'chao ku hua t'ou' are prominently exhibited in all Ch'an halls. 'Chao' is to turn inward the light, and 'ku' is to care for. These (two characters together) mean 'to turn inward the light on the self-nature'. This is to turn inward our minds which are prone to wander outside, and this is called investigation of the hua t'ou. 'Who is the repeater of the Buddha's name?' is a sentence. Before this sentence is uttered, it is called a hua t'ou (lit. sentence's head). As soon as it is uttered, it becomes the sentence's tail (hua wei). In our inquiry into the hua t'ou, this (word) 'Who' should be examined: What is it before it arises? For instance, I am repeating the Buddha's name in this hall. Suddenly someone asks me: 'Who is repeating the Buddha's name?' I reply: 'It is I.' The questioner asks again: 'If you are the repeater of the Buddha's name, do you repeat it with your mouth or with your mind? If you repeat it with your mouth, why don't you repeat it when you sleep? If you repeat it with your mind, why don't you repeat it after your death?' This question will cause a doubt to arise (in our minds) and it is here that we should inquire into this doubt. We should endeavour to know where this 'Who' comes from and what it looks like. Our minute examination should be turned inward and this is also called 'the turning inward of the hearing to hear the self-nature'.

When offering incense and circumambulating in the hall, one's neck should touch the (back of the wide) collar of the robe, one's feet should follow closely the preceding walker, one's mind should be set at rest and one should not look to the right or to the left. With a single mind, the hua t'ou should be well cared for.

When sitting in meditation, the chest should not be pushed forward. The prāṇa (vital energy) should neither be brought upward nor pressed down, and should be left in its natural condition. However, the six sense organs should be brought under control, and all thoughts should be brought to an end. Only the hua t'ou should be gripped and the grip should never loosen. The hua t'ou should not be coarse for it will float up and cannot be brought down. Neither should it be fine, for it will become blurred with the resultant fall into the void. In both cases, no result can be achieved.

If the hua t'ou is properly looked after, the training will become easier and all former habits will be brought automatically to an end. A beginner will not find it easy to hold the hua t'ou well (in his mind), but he should

not worry about it. He should neither hope for awakening nor seek wisdom, for the purpose of this sitting in meditation in the Ch'an week is already the attainment of awakening and wisdom. If he develops a mind in pursuit of these ends, he puts another head upon his own head.[1]

Now we know that we should give rise only to a sentence called hua t'ou which we should care for. If thoughts arise, let them rise and if we disregard them, they will vanish. This is why it is said: 'One should not be afraid of rising thoughts but only of the delay in being aware of them.' If thoughts arise, let our awareness of them nail the hua t'ou to them. If the hua t'ou escapes from our grip, we should immediately bring it back again.

The first sitting in meditation can be likened to a battle against rising thoughts. Gradually the hua t'ou will be well gripped and it will be easy to hold it uninterruptedly during the whole time an incense stick takes to burn.[2] We can expect good results when it does not escape from our grip any more.

The foregoing are only empty words; now let us exert our efforts in the training.

The Second Day

To sit in meditation during a Ch'an week is the best method which sets a time limit for realizing the truth by personal experience. This method was not used in ancient times for the ancients had sharp roots (and did not require it). It has gradually been put into use since the Sung dynasty (fell in 1278). In the Ch'ing dynasty (1662–1910), it was brought into vogue and the Emperor Yung Cheng used to hold frequent Ch'an weeks in the imperial palace. He entertained the highest regard for the Sect and his own attainment of Ch'an samādhi was excellent. Over ten persons realized the truth under the imperial auspices and Master T'ien Hui Ch'e of the Kao Min monastery at Yang Chou attained enlightenment during these meetings (in the palace). The emperor also revised and improved for observance the rules and regulations of the Sect, which flourished and produced so many men of ability. The (strict observance of) rules and regulations is, therefore, of paramount importance.

[1] A Ch'an term which means an unwanted thing which hinders self-realization.
[2] Usually one hour. The longer sticks take an hour and a half to burn.

This method of setting a time limit for personal experience of the truth is likened to a scholars' examination. The candidates sit for it and write their compositions according to the subjects, for each of which a time limit is set. The subject of our Ch'an week is Ch'an meditation. For this reason, this hall is called the Ch'an hall. Ch'an is dhyāna in Sanscrit and means 'unperturbed abstraction'. There are various kinds of Ch'an, such as the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna Ch'ans, the material and immaterial Ch'ans, the Śrāvakas' and the Heretics' Ch'an. Ours is the unsurpassed Ch'an. If one succeeds in seeing through the doubt (mentioned yesterday) and in sitting on and cracking the life-root,[1] one will be similar to the Tathāgata.

For this reason, a Ch'an hall is also called a Buddha's selecting place. It is called a Prajñā hall. The Dharma taught in this hall is the Wu Wei Dharma.[2] Wu Wei means 'not doing'. In other words, not a (single) thing can be gained and not a (single) thing can be done. If there be doing (saṁskṛta),[3] it will produce birth and death. If there is gain, there will be loss. For this reason, the sūtra says: 'There are only words and expressions which have no real meaning.' The recitation of sūtras and the holding of confessional services pertain to doing (saṁskṛta) and are only expediencies used in the teaching school.

As to our Sect, its teaching consists in the direct (self-) cognizance for which words and expressions have no room. Formerly, a student called on the old master Nan Chuan and asked him: 'What is Tao?' Nan Chuan replied: 'The ordinary mind[4] is the truth.' Every day, we wear robes and eat rice; we go out to work and return to rest; all our actions are performed according to the truth.[5] It is because we bind ourselves in every situation that we fail to realize that the self-mind is Buddha.

When Ch'an Master Fa Ch'ang of Ta Mei Mountain called for the first time on Ma Tsu, he asked the latter: 'What is Buddha?' Ma Tsu replied: 'Mind is Buddha.' Thereupon, Ta Mei[6] was completely

[1] Life-root. A root, or basis for life, or reincarnation, the nexus of Hīnayāna between two life-periods, accepted by Mahāyāna as nominal but not real. The Chinese idiom 'to sit on and to crack' is equivalent to the Western term 'to break up'.

[2] Wu Wei. Asaṁskṛta in Sanscrit, anything not subject to cause, condition or dependence; out of time, eternal, inactive, supramundane.

[3] Saṁskṛta. Yu Wei in Chinese, active, creative, productive, functioning, causative, phenomenal, the process resulting from the laws of karma.

[4] Ordinary mind = undiscriminating mind.

[5] Without discrimination, the acts of wearing clothes and eating and all our activities are nothing but the functions of the self-nature; and One reality is all reality. On the other hand if the mind discriminates when one wears one's robe or takes one's meal, everything around one will be the phenomenal.

[6] Ta Mei. In deference to him, the master was called after the name of the mountain where he stayed.

enlightened. He left Ma Tsu and proceeded to the Szu Ming district where he lived in a hermitage formerly belonging to Mei Tsu Chen.

In the Chen Yuan reign (A.D. 785–804) of the T'ang dynasty, a monk who was a disciple of Yen Kuan and went to the mountain to collect branches of trees for making staffs, lost his way and arrived at the hut. He asked Ta Mei: 'How long have you stayed here?' Ta Mei replied: 'I see only four mountains which are blue and yellow.'[1] The monk said: 'Please show me the mountain track so that I can get out of here.' Ta Mei replied: 'Follow the stream.'[2]

Upon his return the monk reported what he saw in the mountain to Yen Kuan who said: 'I once saw a monk in Chiang Hsi (province) but I have had no news of him since. Is it not that monk?'

Then Yen Kuan sent the monk (to the mountain) to invite Ta Mei to come (to his place). In reply, Ta Mei sent the following poem:

> A withered log in the cold forest
> Does not change heart for several springs,
> The woodcutter will not look at it.
> How can a stranger hunt it?
> A lotus pond yields boundless store of clothing:
> More fir cones drop from pines than you can eat.
> When worldly men discover where you live
> You move your thatched hut far into the hills.[3]

Ma Tsu heard of Ta Mei's stay on the mountain and sent a monk to ask him this question: 'What did you obtain when you called on the great master Ma Tsu and what prompted you to stay here?' Ta Mei replied: 'The great master told me that mind was Buddha and that is why I came to stay here.' The monk said: 'The great master's Buddha Dharma is different now.' Ta Mei asked: 'What is it now?' The monk replied: 'He says it is neither mind nor Buddha.'[4] Ta Mei said: 'That old man is causing confusion in the minds of others and all this will have no end. Let him say that it is neither mind nor Buddha. As far as I am concerned, Mind is Buddha.'

[1] The mountains are immutable and symbolize the unchanging self-nature, whereas their colours (blue and yellow) change and symbolize appearance, i.e. the phenomenal. Ta Mei's reply meant that his self-nature was the same and beyond time.

[2] If your mind wanders outside, it will follow the stream of birth and death.

[3] When the mind is free from passions, it is like a withered log which is indifferent to its surroundings and does not 'grow' any more in spite of the spring, the season of the year in which trees begin to grow after lying dormant all winter. A mind free from delusion remains unchanged and indifferent to all changes in its surrounding and to those who hunt after it.

[4] Because his disciples clung to his saying: 'Mind is Buddha,' Ma Tsu said to them: 'It is neither mind nor Buddha' so that they ceased to cling, which was the cause of their delusion.

When the monk returned and reported the above dialogue to Ma Tsu, the latter said: 'The plum is now ripe.'[1]

This shows how the ancients were competent and concise. Because of our inferior roots and perverted thinking, the masters taught us to hold a hua t'ou (in our minds) and they were obliged to use this expedient. Master Yung Chia said: 'After the elimination of the ego and dharma, the attainment of reality will destroy the Avīci hell in a moment (kṣaṇa). If I tell a lie to deceive living beings, I will consent to fall into the hell where the tongue is pulled out (as punishment for my verbal sin).'[2] Master Yuan Miao of Kao Feng said: 'Ch'an training is like throwing into a deep pond a tile which sinks to the bottom.' When we hold a hua t'ou, we must look into it until we reach its 'bottom' and 'crack' it. Master Yuan Miao also swore: 'If someone holding a hua t'ou without giving rise to a second thought, fails to realize the truth, I will be (ready) to fall into the hell where the tongue is pulled out.' The sole reason why (we do not succeed in our practice) is because our faith (in the hua t'ou) is not deep enough and because we do not put an end to our (wrong) thinking. If we are firmly determined to escape from the round of births and deaths, a sentence of the hua t'ou will never escape from our grip. Master Kuei Shan said: 'If in every reincarnation we (can hold it firmly) without backsliding, the Buddha stage can be expected.'

All beginners are inclined to give rise to all kinds of (false) thoughts; they have a pain in the legs and do not know how to undergo the training. The truth is that they should be firm in their determination to escape from the round of births and deaths. They should stick to the hua t'ou and no matter whether they walk, stand, sit or lie, they should grasp it. From morning to evening, they should look into this (word) 'Who' until it becomes as clear as 'the autumn moon reflected in a limpid pool'. It should be clearly (and closely) inquired into and should be neither blurred nor unsteady. (If this can be achieved) why worry about the Buddha stage which seems unattainable?

If the hua t'ou becomes blurred, you can open your eyes wide and raise your chest gently; this will raise your spirits. At the same time, it should not be held too loosely, nor should it be too fine, because if it is too fine, it will cause a fall into emptiness and dullness. If you fall into emptiness, you will perceive only stillness and will experience liveliness.

[1] Ta Mei means 'Big Plum'. Ma Tsu confirmed that master Ta Mei was ripe, i.e enlightened.

[2] Quotation from Yung Chia's 'Song of Enlightenment'. Avīci is the last and deepest of the eight hot hells, where sinners suffer, die, and are instantly reborn to suffering, without interruption. Kṣaṇa is the shortest measure of time, as kalpa is the longest.

At this moment, the hua t'ou should not be allowed to escape from your grip so that you can take a step forward after you have reached 'the top of the pole'.[1] Otherwise, you will fall into dull emptiness and will never attain the ultimate.

If it is loosely gripped, you will be easily assailed by false thoughts. If false thoughts arise, they will be difficult to suppress.

Therefore, coarseness should be tempered with fineness and fineness with coarseness to succeed in the training and to realize the sameness of the mutable and immutable.

Formerly I was at Chin Shan and other monasteries and when the Karmadāna[2] received the incense sticks which he had ordered (previously), his two feet ran[3] with great speed as if he flew (in the air) and the monks who followed him were also good runners. As soon as the signal was given, all of them looked like automata. (Thus) how could wrong thoughts arise (in their minds)? At present (although) we also walk (after sitting in meditation), what a great difference there is between then and now!

When you sit in meditation, you should not push up the hua t'ou for this will cause its dimness. You should not hold it in your chest for it causes pain in the chest. Neither should you press it down, for it will expand the belly and will cause your fall into the realm of the five aggregates (skandhas)[4] resulting in all kinds of defect. With serenity and self-possession, only the word 'Who' should be looked into with the same care with which a hen sits on her egg and a cat pounces on a mouse. When the hua-t'ou is efficiently held, the life-root will automatically be cut off.

This method is obviously not an easy one for beginners, but you must exert yourselves unceasingly. Now I give you an example. Self-cultivation is likened to making fire with a piece of flint. We must know the method of producing a fire and if we do not know it, we will never light a fire

[1] The instant one perceives only stillness and experiences liveliness; it is called in Ch'an parlance 'reaching the top of a hundred-foot pole'. All masters advised their disciples not to abide in this state which was not real. Master Han Shan composed 'The Song of the Board-bearer' to warn his followers against 'silent immersion in stagnant water'. This state is called 'life' and is the fourth of the four signs (lakṣaṇa) mentioned in the Diamond Sūtra. (See Part 3.)

[2] Karmadāna: the duty-distributor, second in command of a monastery.

[3] After a meditation, the monks used to march quickly in single file to relax their legs, preceded by the Karmadāna and followed by the abbot.

[4] Realm of the five skandhas: the present world as the state of the five aggregates. The best place in which to hold the hua t'ou is between the pit of the stomach and the navel. A meditator may have all kinds of visions before his attainment of enlightenment, and these visions belong to the realm of the five skandhas, i.e. are creations of his mind. His master would instruct him to remain indifferent, to neither 'accept' nor 'reject' these visions which will disappear before the meditator makes further progress in the right direction.

even if we break the flint in pieces. The method consists in using a bit of tinder and a steel. The tinder is held under the flint and the steel strikes the upper part of the flint so as to direct the spark to the tinder which will catch it. This is the only method of starting a fire (with a flint).

Although we know quite well that Mind is Buddha, we are still unable to accept this as a fact. For this reason, a sentence of the hua t'ou has been used as the fire-starting-steel. It was just the same when formerly the World Honoured One became thoroughly enlightened after gazing at the stars at night. We are not clear about the self-nature because we do not know how to start a fire. Our fundamental self-nature and the Buddha do not differ from each other. It is only because of our perverted thinking that we are (still) not liberated. So the Buddha is still Buddha and we are still ourselves. Now as we know the method, if we could inquire into it, it would indeed be an unsurpassing co-operating cause! I hope that everyone here will, by exerting himself, take a step forward from the top of a hundred-foot pole and will be elected (Buddha) in this hall so that he can pay the debt of gratitude he owes to the Buddha high above and deliver living beings here below. If the Buddha Dharma does not produce men of ability, it is because no one is willing to exert himself. Our heart is full of sadness when we talk about this (situation). If we really have deep faith in the words uttered under oath by Masters Yung Chia and Yuan Miao, we are sure we will also realize the truth. Now is the time to exert yourselves!

The Third Day

Time passes quickly (indeed); we have only just opened this Ch'an week and it is already the third day. Those who have efficiently held the hua t'ou (in their minds) have (been able to) clear up their passions and wrong thoughts; they can now go straight home.[1] For this reason, an ancient (master) said:

> Self-cultivation has no other method;
> It requires but knowledge of the way.
> If the way only can be known,
> Birth and death at once will end.

[1] To go straight home. A Ch'an idiom meaning the return to the self-nature, i.e. realization of the real. 'Home' is our self-natured Buddha.

Our way consists in laying down our baggage[1] and our home is very near. The Sixth Patriarch said: 'If the preceding thought does not arise, it is mind. If the following thought does not end, it is Buddha.'[2]

Fundamentally, our four elements are void and the five aggregates (skandhas) are non-existent. It is only because of (our) wrong thoughts which grasp (everything) that we like the illusion of the (impermanent) world and are thereby held in bondage. Consequently, we are unable to (perceive) the voidness of the four elements and (to realize) the non-existence of birth and death. However, if in a single thought, we can have an experience of that which is not born, there will be no need for those Dharma doors expounded by Śākyamuni Buddha. (If so) can it still be said that birth and death cannot be brought to an end? On that account, the brightness of our Sect's Dharma really illumines the boundless space in the ten directions.

Master Teh Shan was a native of Chien Chou town in Szu Ch'uan. His lay surname was Chou. He left home at the age of twenty. After being fully ordained, he studied the Vinaya-piṭaka[3] which he mastered. He was well-versed in the teaching of the noumenal and phenomenal as expounded in the sūtras. He used to teach the Diamond Prajñā and was called 'Diamond Chou'.

Said he to his schoolmates:

When a hair swallows the ocean[4]
The nature-ocean[5] loses naught.
To hit a needle's point with mustard seed
Shakes not the needle's point.[6]
(Of) śaikṣa and aśaikṣa[7]
I know and I alone.

When he heard that the Ch'an Sect was flourishing in the South, he could not keep his temper and said: 'All who leave home take a

[1] Baggage: our body, mind and all the seeming which we hold dear.

[2] That which has no birth and death, i.e. the eternal self-nature.

[3] Vinaya-piṭaka. One of the three divisions of the canon or Tripiṭaka. It emphasizes the discipline. The other two divisions are: sūtras (sermons) and śāstras (treatises).

[4] The two forms of Karma resulting from one's past are: (1) the resultant person, symbolized by a *hair*, and (2) the dependent condition or environment, e.g. country, family, possessions, etc., symbolized by the *ocean*. These two forms being illusory only, they penetrate each other without changing the self-nature, or the nature-ocean (see footnote 5) which is beyond time and space.

[5] Nature-ocean. The ocean of the Bhūtatathatā, the all-containing, immaterial nature of the Dharmakāya.

[6] The appearance of a Buddha is as rare as the hitting of a needle's point with a fine mustard-seed thrown from a devaloka. Even an accurate hit does not move the immutable needle's point.

[7] Śaikṣa, need of study; aśaikṣa, no longer learning, beyond study, the state of arhatship, the fourth of the śrāvaka stages; the preceding three stages requiring study. When the arhat is free from all illusion, he has nothing more to study.

thousand aeons to learn the Buddha's respect-inspiring deportment[1] and ten thousand aeons to study the Buddha's fine deeds; (in spite of this) they are still unable to attain Buddhahood. How can those demons in the south dare to say that the direct indication of the mind leads to the perception of the (self-) nature and attainment of Buddhahood? I must (go to the south,) sweep away their den and destroy their race to repay the debt of gratitude I owe the Buddha.'

He left Szu Ch'uan province with Ch'iṅg Lung's Commentary[2] on his shoulders. When he reached Li Yang, he saw an old woman selling tien hsin (lit. mind-refreshment)[3] on the roadside. He halted, laid down his load and intended to buy some pastries to refresh his mind. The old woman pointed at the load and asked him: 'What is this literature?' Teh Shan replied: 'Ch'ing Lung's Commentary.' The old woman asked: 'Commentary on what sūtra?' Teh Shan replied: 'On the Diamond Sūtra.' The old woman said: 'I have a question to ask you; if you can answer it, I will offer you mind-refreshment. If you cannot reply, (please) go away. The Diamond Sūtra says: "The past, present and future mind cannot be found." What do you want to refresh?'

Teh Shan remained speechless. He (left the place and) went to the Dragon Pond (Lung T'an) monastery. He entered the Dharma hall and said: 'I have long desired to see the Dragon Pond, but as I arrive here, neither is the pond seen nor does the dragon appear.' Hearing this, (Master) Lung T'an came out and said: 'You have really arrived at the Dragon Pond.'[4] Teh Shan remained speechless; he then (made up his mind to) stay at the monastery.

One night, while he was standing (as an attendant) by Lung T'an, the latter said to him: 'It is late now, why don't you go back to your quarters?' After wishing his master good night, he withdrew but returned and said: 'It is very dark outside.' Lung T'an lit a paper-torch and handed it to him. When Teh Shan was about to take the torch, Lung T'an blew out the light.[5]

[1] Dignity in walking, standing, sitting and lying.

[2] A Commentary on the Diamond Sūtra by Tao Yin of the Ch'ing Lung monastery.

[3] Tien hsin, pastry, snack, refreshment to keep up one's spirits.

[4] Lung T'an was an enlightened master. The sentence: 'You have really arrived at the Dragon Pond' means: 'You have really attained the state of Lung T'an or enlightenment for the real is invisible and does not appear before the eyes of the unenlightened'. Teh Shan did not understand its meaning and remained speechless. This was the second time he remained speechless, the first being when the old woman asked him about the past, present and future mind. He was still unenlightened but became later an eminent Ch'an master after his awakening.

[5] Lung T'an was an eminent master and knew the moment was ripe to enlighten Teh Shan. The latter perceived the master's self-nature through its function which blew out the torch. At the same time, Teh Shan perceived also that which 'saw' the torch blown out, i.e. his own nature.

Thereupon Teh Shan was completely enlightened and made his obeisance to the master (to thank him). Lung T'an asked him: 'What have you seen?' Teh Shan replied: 'In future, I will entertain no more doubt about the tips of the tongues of the old monks all over the country.'[1]

The following day, Lung T'an ascended to his seat and said to the assembly: 'There is a fellow whose teeth are like sword-leaf trees and whose mouth is like a blood bath.[2] He receives a stroke of the staff but does not turn his head.[3] Later, he will set up my doctrine on the top of a solitary peak.'[4]

In front of the Dharma hall, Teh Shan laid on the ground all the sheets of the Ch'ing Lung Commentary in a heap and raising a torch said: 'An exhaustive discussion of the abstruse is like a hair placed in the great void (and) the exertion to the full of all human capabilities is like a drop of water poured into the great ocean.' Then he burned the manuscript. He bade farewell to his master and left the monastery.

He went straight to Kuei Shan (monastery) and carrying his baggage under his arm, he entered the Dharma hall which he crossed from its east to its west side and then from its west to its east side. He looked at the abbot (Master Kuei Shan) and said: 'Anything? Anything?' Kuei Shan was sitting in the hall but paid no attention to the visitor. Teh Shan said: 'Nothing, nothing,' and left the hall.[5]

When he reached the front door of the monastery, he said to himself: 'Be that as it may, I should not be so careless.' Then, he turned back and again entered the hall in full ceremony. As he crossed its threshold, he took out and raised his cloth rug (nisīdana),[6] calling: 'Venerable

[1] Old monks all over the country: a Chinese idiom referring to eminent Ch'an masters who were intransigent and exacting when teaching and guiding their disciples. Readers may learn about these masters by studying their sayings which seem ambiguous but are full of deep meaning.

[2] A fellow who was awe-inspiring like the two hells where there are hills of swords or sword-leaf trees and blood baths as punishments for sinners. Lung T'an foretold the severity with which Teh Shan would receive, teach and train his disciples. Those wishing to familiarize themselves with these awe-inspiring things should read Dr. W. Y. Evans-Wentz's *The Tibetan Book of the Dead* (Oxford University Press).

[3] Ch'an masters frequently used their staffs to strike their disciples to provoke their awakening. The stroke of the staff here referred to Teh Shan's enlightenment after 'seeing' the torch blown out by his master. Teh Shan did not turn his head, because he was really enlightened and did not have any more doubt about his self-nature.

[4] Will be an outstanding Ch'an master.

[5] This walk from east to west and then from west to east meant the 'coming' and 'going' which were non-existent in the Dharmadhātu wherein the Dharmakāya remained immutable and unchanging. Teh Shan's question: 'Anything? Anything?' and the reply: 'Nothing, Nothing,' served to emphasize the nothingness in space.

[6] Niṣīdana, a cloth for sitting on.

Upādhyāya!'[1] As Kuei Shan was about to pick up a dust-whisk,[2] Teh Shan shouted[3] and left the hall.

That evening, Kuei Shan asked the leader of the assembly: 'Is the newcomer still here?' The leader replied: 'When he left the hall, he turned his back to it, put on his straw sandals and went away.'[4] Kuei Shan said: 'That man will later go to some lonely peak where he will erect a thatched hut; he will scold Buddhas and curse Patriarchs.'[5]

Teh Shan stayed thirty years at Li Yang. During the persecution of Buddhists by the Emperor Wu Tsung (A.D. 841–846) of the T'ang dynasty, the master took refuge in a stone hut on the Tu Fou mountain (in A.D. 847). At the beginning of Ta Chung's reign, prefect Hsieh T'ing Wang of Wu Ling restored the veneration of Teh Shan monastery and named it Ko Teh Hall. He was looking for a man of outstanding ability to take charge of the monastery when he heard of the master's reputation. In spite of several invitations, Teh Shan refused to descend the (Tu Fou) mountain. Finally, the prefect devised a stratagem and sent his men falsely to accuse him of smuggling tea and salt in defiance of the law. When the master was brought to the prefecture, the prefect paid obeisance to him and insistently invited him to take charge of the Ch'an hall where Teh Shan spread widely the Sect's teaching.

Later, people talked about Teh Shan's shouting and Lin Chi's[6] caning. If we can discipline ourselves like these two masters, why should we be unable to put an end to birth and death? After Teh Shan, came Yen T'ou and Hsueh Feng. After Hsueh Feng, came Yun Men and Fa Yen,[7] and also state master Teh Shao and ancestor Yen Shou of

[1] Upādhyāya, a general term for a monk.

[2] The duster used by the ancients consisted of long horse hairs attached to the end of its handle. It was used to reveal the function of the self-nature.

[3] The shout was to reveal that which uttered it, i.e. the self-nature.

[4] Teh Shan took out and raised his niṣīdana, calling: 'Venerable Upādhyāya' to show the function of that which took out and raised the niṣīdana and called Kuei Shan. When the latter was about to take the duster to test the visitor's enlightenment, Teh Shan shouted just to indicate the presence of the substance of that which called on the host. Teh Shan left the hall and went away to show the return of function to the substance. Thus Teh Shan's enlightenment was complete, because both function and substance, or Prajñā and Samādhi were on a level. Therefore, he did not require any further instruction and any test of his attainment would be superfluous. For this reason, Kuei Shan praised the visitor, saying: 'That man will later go to some solitary peak . . . will scold Buddhas and Patriarchs.'

[5] Teh Shan would 'scold' unreal Buddhas and 'curse' unreal Patriarchs who existed only in the impure minds of deluded disciples, for the latter's conditioned and discriminating minds could create only impure Buddhas and impure Patriarchs. Teh Shan's teaching was based only on the absolute Prajñā which had no room for worldly feelings and discernings, the causes of birth and death.

[6] Lin Chi was the founder of the Lin Chi Sect, one of the five Ch'an Sects of China.

[7] Yun Men and Fa Yen were respective founders of the Yun Men and Fa Yen Sects, two of the five Ch'an Sects in China.

the Yung Ming (monastery). They were all 'produced' by (Teh Shan's) staff.

During the past successive dynasties, the Sect was kept going by great ancestors and masters. You are here to hold a Ch'an week and you understand very well this unsurpassed doctrine which will enable (us) without difficulty to attain direct (self-) cognizance and liberation from birth and death. However, if you trifle with it and do not train seriously, or if from morning to evening, you like to behold the 'demon in the bright shadow' or to make your plans inside 'the den of words and expressions', you will never escape from birth and death.[1] Now, all of you, please exert yourselves diligently.

The Fourth Day

This is the fourth day of our Ch'an week. You have exerted yourselves in your training; some of you have composed poems and gāthās and have presented them to me for verification. This is not an easy thing but those of you who have made efforts in this manner, must have forgotten my two previous lectures. Yesterday evening, I said:

> Self-cultivation has no other method;
> It requires but knowledge of the way.

We are here to inquire into the hua t'ou which is the way we should follow. Our purpose is to be clear about birth and death and to attain Buddhahood. In order to be clear about birth and death, we must have recourse to this hua t'ou which should be used as the Vajra King's[2] precious sword to cut down demons if demons come and Buddhas if Buddhas come[3] so that no feelings will remain and not a single thing (dharma) can be set up. In such a manner, where could there have been wrong thinking about writing poems and gāthās and seeing such states as voidness and brightness?[4] If you made your efforts (so wrongly), I really do not know where

[1] If while sitting in meditation one only takes delight in false visions or in the wrong interpretation of sūtras and sayings, one will never attain the real.

[2] The strongest or sharpest precious sword.

[3] i.e. false visions of demons and Buddhas in one's meditation.

[4] Beginners usually see the voidness and brightness as soon as all thoughts are discarded. Although these visions indicate some progress in the training, they should not be taken as achievements. The meditator should remain indifferent to them as they are only the creation of the deluded mind and should hold firm the hua t'ou.

your hua t'ou went. Experienced Ch'an monks do not require further talks about this, but beginners should be very careful.

As I was apprehensive that you might not know how to undergo your training, I talked during the last two days about the purpose of sitting in meditation in a Ch'an week, the worthiness of this method devised by our Sect and the way of making efforts. Our method consists in concentrating pointedly on a hua t'ou which should not be interrupted by day or night in the same way as running water. It should be spirited and clear and should never be blurred. It should be clearly and constantly cognizable. All worldly feelings and holy interpretations should be cut down (by it). An ancient (master) said:

> Study the truth as you would defend a citadel
> Which, when besieged, (at all costs) must be held.
> If intense cold strikes not to the bone,
> How can plum blossom fragrant be?

These four lines came from (Master) Huang Po and have two meanings. The first two illustrate those who undergo the (Ch'an) training and who should hold firm the hua t'ou in the same manner as the defence of a citadel which no foe must be allowed to enter. This is the unyielding defence (of the citadel). Each of us has a mind which is the eighth consciousness (vijñāna), as well as the seventh, sixth and the first five consciousnesses. The first five are the five thieves of the eye, ear, nose, tongue and body. The sixth consciousness is the thief of mind (manas). The seventh is the deceptive consciousness (kliṣṭa-mano-vijñāna) which from morning to evening grasps the eighth consciousness' 'subject' and mistakes it for an 'ego'. It incites the sixth to lead the first five consciousnesses to seek external objects (such as) form, sound, smell, taste and touch. Being constantly deceived and tied the eighth consciousness-mind is held in bondage without being able to free itself. For this reason we are obliged to have recourse to this hua t'ou and use its 'Vajra King's Precious Sword' to kill all these thieves so that the eighth consciousness can be transmuted into the Great Mirror Wisdom, the seventh into the Wisdom of Equality, the sixth into the Profound Observing Wisdom and the first five consciousnesses into the Perfecting Wisdom.[1] It is of paramount importance first to transmute the sixth and seventh consciousnesses, for they play the leading role and because of their power in discriminating and discerning. While you were seeing the voidness and the brightness and composing poems and gāthās, these two consciousnesses performed their (evil)

[1] Cf. Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch.

functions. Today, we should use this hua t'ou to transmute the discriminating consciousness into the Profound Observing Wisdom and the mind which differentiates between ego and personality into the Wisdom of Equality. This is called the transmutation of consciousness into wisdom and the transformation of the worldly into the saintly. It is important not to allow these thieves who are fond of form, sound, smell, taste, touch and dharma, to attack us. Therefore, this is likened to the defence of a citadel.

The last two lines:

> If intense cold strikes not to the bone
> How can plum blossom fragrant be?

illustrate living beings in the three worlds of existence[1] who are engulfed in the ocean of birth and death, tied to the five desires,[2] deceived by their passions, and unable to obtain liberation. Hence the plum blossom is used as an illustration, for these plum trees spring into blossom in snowy weather. In general, insects and plants are born in the spring, grow in summer, remain stationary in autumn and lie dormant in winter. In winter, insects and plants either die or lie dormant. The snow also lays the dust which is cold and cannot rise in the air. These insects, plants and dust are likened to our mind's wrong thinking, discerning, ignorance, envy and jealousy resulting from contamination with the three poisons.[3] If we rid ourselves of these (impurities), our minds will be naturally comfortable and plum blossoms will be fragrant in the snow. But you should know that these plum trees blossom in the bitter cold and not in the lovely bright spring or in the mild breeze of charming weather. If we want our mind-flowers to bloom, we cannot expect this flowering in the midst of pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy or (when we hold the conception of) ego, personality, right and wrong. If we are confused about these eight kinds of mind, the result will be unrecordable.[4] If evil actions are committed, the result will be evil. If good actions are performed, the result will be good.

There are two kinds of unrecordable nature; that of dreams and of dead emptiness. The unrecordable nature of dreams is that of illusory things appearing in a dream and unconnected with usually well-known

[1] World of desire, world of form and formless world.

[2] The five desires arising from the objects of the five senses, things seen, heard, smelt, tasted and touched.

[3] The three poisons are: concupiscence or wrong desire, hate or resentment, and stupidity.

[4] i.e. neutral, neither good nor bad, things that are innocent or cannot be classified under moral categories.

daily activities. This is the state of an independent mind-consciousness (mano-vijñāna).[1] This is also called an independent unrecordable state.

What is the unrecordable dead emptiness? In our meditation, if we lose sight of the hua t'ou while dwelling in stillness, there results an indistinctive voidness wherein there is nothing. The clinging to this state of stillness is a Ch'an illness which we should never contract while undergoing our training. This is the unrecordable dead emptiness.

What we have to do is throughout the day to hold without loosening our grip the hua t'ou which should be lively, bright, undimmed and clearly and constantly cognizable. Such a condition should obtain no matter whether we walk or sit. For this reason, an ancient master said:

'When walking, naught but Ch'an; when sitting, naught but Ch'an. Then body is at peace whether or no one talks or moves.'

Ancestor Han Shan said:

High on a mountain peak
Only boundless space is seen.
How to sit in meditation, no one knows.
The solitary moon shines o'er the icy pool,
But in the pool there is no moon;
The moon is in the night-blue sky.
This song is chanted now,
(But) there's no Ch'an in the song.[2]

You and I must have a co-operating cause, which is why I have this opportunity of addressing you on the (Ch'an) training. I hope you will exert yourselves and make steady progress, and will not wrongly apply your minds.

I will tell you another story, a kung an (or kōan in Japanese). After the founder of the Hsi T'an (Siddham in Sanskrit) monastery on the Cock's Foot (Chi Tsu) mountain had left home, he called on enlightened masters (for instruction) and made very good progress in his training. One day, he stopped at an inn, and heard a girl in a bean-curd shop singing this song:

Bean-curd Chang and Bean-curd Li![3]
While your heads rest on the pillow,
You think a thousand thoughts,
Yet tomorrow you will sell bean-curd again.

[1] i.e. when the sixth consciousness is independent of the first five.
[2] See page 47 for comment.
[3] Chang and Li are the Chinese equivalents of Smith and Brown.

The master was sitting in meditation and upon hearing this song, he was instantaneously awakened.[1] This shows that when the ancients underwent the training, there was no necessity of doing it in a Ch'an hall for experiencing the truth. The (self-) cultivation and training lie in the One-Mind. So, all of you, please don't allow your minds to be disturbed in order not to waste your time. Otherwise, you will be selling bean-curd again tomorrow morning.[2]

The Fifth Day

About this method of (self-) cultivation, it can be said that it is both easy and difficult. It is easy because it is really easy and it is difficult because it is really difficult.

It is easy because you are only required to lay down (every thought), to have a firm faith in it (the method) and to develop a lasting mind. All this will ensure your success.

It is difficult because you are afraid of enduring hardships and because of your desire to be at ease. You should know all worldly occupations also require study and training before success can be achieved. How much more so when we want to learn (wisdom) from the sages in order to become Buddhas and Patriarchs. Can we reach our goal if we (act) carelessly?

Therefore, the first thing is to have a firm mind in our self-cultivation and performance of the truth. In this, we cannot avoid being obstructed by demons. These demoniacal obstructions are the (external) karmic surroundings caused by our passions for all form, sound, smell, taste, touch and dharma as enumerated in my talk yesterday. This karmic environment is our foe through life and death. For this reason, there are many sūtra expounding Dharma masters who cannot stand firm on their own feet while in the midst of these surroundings because of their wavering religious mind.[3]

The next important thing is to develop an enduring mind. Since our

[1] In his meditation, the master had already discarded all thoughts and upon hearing the song, he instantly perceived that which heard the song, i.e. the self-nature. This is called Avalokiteśvara's complete enlightenment by means of hearing, or the successful turning inward of the faculty of hearing to hear the self-nature.—Cf. Śūraṇgama Sūtra.

[2] Bean-curd is made of soy-bean and is very cheap, so that only poor people make it for sale. For this reason, they are never satisfied with their lot and always want to do something more profitable.

[3] The mind which is bent on the right way, which seeks enlightenment.

birth in this world, we have created boundless karmas and if we now wish to cultivate ourselves for the purpose of escaping from birth and death, can we wipe out our former habits all at once? In olden times, ancestors such as Ch'an master Ch'ang Ch'ing, who sat in meditation until he had worn out seven mats, and (Ch'an master) Chao Chou who wandered from place to place (soliciting instruction) at the age of eighty after having spent forty years in meditating on the word 'Wu' (*lit.* No) without giving rise to a thought in his mind. They finally obtained complete enlightenment, and the princes of the Yen and Chao states revered them and made offerings to them. In the Ch'ing dynasty, Emperor Yung Cheng (1723–35) who had read their sayings and had found these excellent, bestowed upon them the posthumous title of 'Ancient Buddha'. This is the resultant attainment after a whole life of austerity. If we can now wipe out all our former habits to purify our One-thought, we will be on an equality with Buddhas and Patriarchs. The Śūraṅgama Sūtra says:

'It is like the purification of muddy water stored in a clean container; left unshaken in complete calmness, the sand and mud will sink to the bottom. When the clear water appears, this is called the first suppression of the intruding evil element of passion.[1] When the mud has been removed leaving behind only the clear water, this is called the permanent cutting off of basic ignorance.'[2]

Our habitual passions are likened to mud and sediment, which is why we must make use of the hua t'ou. The hua t'ou is likened to alum used to clarify muddy water in the same manner as passions are brought under control. If in his training, a man succeeds in achieving the sameness of body and mind with the resultant appearance of the condition of stillness, he should be careful and should never abide in it. He should know that it is (only) an initial step but that ignorance caused by passions is still not wiped out. This is (only) the deluded mind reaching the state of purity, just like muddy water which, although purified, still contains mud and sediment at the bottom. You must make additional efforts to advance further. An ancient master said:

Sitting on a pole top one hundred feet in heighth[3]
One will still perceive (that) which is not real.
If from the pole top one then takes a step
One's body will appear throughout the Universe.

[1] Āgantu-kleśa in Sanskrit, the foreign atom, or intruding element, which enters the mind and causes distress and delusion. The mind will be pure only after the evil element has been removed.

[2] Water is the symbol of self-nature and mud of ignorance caused by passions.

[3] A state of empty stillness in which all thoughts have ceased to arise and Prajñā is not yet attained.

If you do not take a step forward, you will take the illusion-city for your home and your passions will be able to rise (again). If so, it will be difficult for you to become even a self-enlightened person.[1] For this reason, the mud must be removed in order to retain the (clear) water. This is the permanent wiping out of the basic ignorance and only then can Buddhahood be attained. When ignorance has been permanently wiped out, you will be able to appear in bodily form in the ten directions of the Universe to expound the Dharma, in the same manner as Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva who can appear in thirty-two forms and who, in manifesting to teach the Dharma, can choose the most appropriate form to liberate a responsive living being. You will be free from restraint and will enjoy independence and comfort (everywhere) even in a house of prostitution, a public bar, the womb of a cow, a mare or a mule, in paradise or hell.

On the other hand, a discriminating thought will send you down to the turning wheel of births and deaths. Formerly, Ch'in Kuai[2] who had (in a former life) made offerings of incense and candles to Kṣitigarbha Bodhisattva but did not develop an enduring mind (in his training) because of his failure to wipe out his ignorance caused by passions, was the victim of his hatred-mind (in his following reincarnation). This is just an example.

If your believing-mind is strong and your enduring-mind does not retrograde, you will, in your present bodily form, be able to attain Buddhahood, even if you are only an ordinary man.

Formerly there was a poor and miserable man who joined the order (saṅgha) at a monastery. Although he was keen to practise (self-) cultivation, he did not know the method. As he did not know whom to ask about it, he decided to toil and moil every day. One day, a wandering monk came to the monastery and saw the man toiling. The monk asked him about his practice and the man replied: 'Every day, I do this kind of hard work. Please show me the method of (self-) cultivation.' The monk replied: 'You should inquire into (the sentence:) "Who is the repeater of Buddha's name?" ' As instructed by the visiting monk, the man managed to bear the word 'Who' in mind while he did his daily work. Later, he went to stay in a grotto on an islet to continue his training, using leaves for clothing and plants for food. His mother and sister who were still living, heard of his retreat in a grotto on an islet where he endured hardships in his self-cultivation. His mother sent his sister to take him a roll

[1] In contrast with a Bodhisattva who seeks self-enlightenment to enlighten the multitude.
[2] A statesman of the Sung dynasty, through whom Yueh Fei, a good commander, was executed; he is universally execrated for this and his name is now synonymous with traitor.

ಕೇಂದ್ರ ಗ್ರಂಥಾಲಯ
ಕುವೆಂಪು ವಿಶ್ವವಿದ್ಯಾನಿಲಯ

of cloth and some provisions. When she arrived, she saw him seated (in meditation). She called him but he did not reply, and she shook him but he did not move. Seeing that her brother neither looked at nor greeted her but continued his meditation in the grotto, she was enraged, left the roll of cloth and provisions there and returned home. Thirteen years later, his sister went again to visit him and saw the same roll of cloth still lying in the same place.

Later a hungry refugee came to the grotto wherein he saw a monk in ragged garments; he entered and begged for food. The monk (got up and) went to the side of the grotto to pick some pebbles which he placed in a pot. After cooking them for a while, he took them out and invited the visitor to eat them with him. The pebbles looked like potatoes and when the visitor had satisfied his hunger, the monk said to him: 'Please do not mention our meal to outsiders.'

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Some time later, the monk thought to himself: 'I have stayed here so many years for my (self-) cultivation and should now form (propitious) causes (for the welfare of others).' Thereupon, he proceeded to Hsia Men[1] where on the side of a road, he built a thatched hut offering free tea (to travellers). This took place in Wan Li's reign (1573–1619) about the time the empress mother passed away. The emperor wanted to invite eminent monks to perform (Buddhist) ceremonies for the welfare of his deceased mother. He first intended to invite monks in the capital but at the time, there were no eminent monks there. (One night) the emperor saw in a dream his mother who said that there was one in the Chang Chou prefecture of Fu Chien province. The emperor sent officials there to invite local monks to come to the capital for the ceremonies. When these monks with their bundles set out on their journey to the capital, they passed by the hut of the poor monk who asked them: 'Venerable masters, what makes you so happy and where are you going?' They replied: 'We have received the emperor's order to proceed to the capital to perform ceremonies for the spirit of the empress mother.' The poor monk said: 'May I go with you?' They replied: 'You are so miserable, how can you go with us?' He said: 'I do not know how to recite sūtras but I can carry your bundles for you. It is worth while to pay a visit to the capital.' Thereupon, he picked up the bundles and followed the other monks to the capital.

When the emperor knew that the monks were about to arrive, he ordered an official to bury a copy of the Diamond Sūtra under the doorstep of the palace. When the monks arrived, they did not know anything

[1] Hsia Men, Amoy, a town on the south coast of Fukien province.

about the sūtra, crossed the doorstep and entered the palace one after another. When the miserable monk reached the threshold, he knelt upon his knees and brought his palms together but did not enter (the palace). In spite of the door-keepers who called him and tried to drag him in, he refused to enter. When the incident was reported to the emperor who had ordered the burial of the sūtra, he realized that the holy monk had arrived and came personally to receive him. He said: 'Why don't you enter the palace?' The monk replied: 'I dare not, because a copy of the Diamond Sūtra has been buried in the ground.' The emperor said: 'Why don't you stand on your head to enter it?' Upon hearing this, the monk placed his hands upon the ground and somersaulted into the palace. The emperor had the greatest respect for him and invited him to stay in the inner palace.

When asked about the altar and the ceremony, the monk replied: 'The ceremony will be held tomorrow morning, in the fifth watch of the night. I will require only one altar with one leading[1] banner and one table with incense, candles and fruit for offerings (to Buddhas).' The emperor was not pleased with the prospect of an unimpressive ceremony and was at the same time apprehensive that the monk might not possess enough virtue to perform it. (To test his virtue), he ordered two maids of honour to bathe the monk. (During and) after the bath, his genital organ remained unmoved. The maids of honour reported this to the emperor whose respect for the monk grew the greater for he realized now that the visitor was really holy. Preparation was then made according to the monk's instruction and the following morning, the monk ascended to his seat to expound the Dharma. Then he ascended to the altar, joined his palms together (to salute) and holding the banner, went to the coffin, saying:

> In reality I do not come;
> (But) in your likes you are one-sided.
> In one thought to realize there is no birth
> Means that you will leap o'er the deva realms.

After the ceremony, the monk said to the emperor: 'I congratulate you on the liberation of her majesty the Empress Mother.' As the emperor was doubting the efficiency of a ceremony which ended in such a manner, he heard in the room the voice of the deceased saying: 'I am now liberated; you should bow your thanks to the holy master.'

The emperor was taken aback, and his face beamed with delight. He paid obeisance to the monk and thanked him. In the inner palace, a vegetarian banquet was offered to the master. Seeing that the emperor

[1] To lead the spirit of the deceased to the Pure Land.

was wearing a pair of coloured trousers, the monk fixed his eyes on them. The emperor asked him: 'Does the Virtuous One like this pair of trousers?' and taking them off he offered them to the visitor who said: 'Thank your Majesty for his grace.' Thereupon, the emperor bestowed upon the monk the title of State Master Dragon Trousers. After the banquet, the emperor led the monk to the imperial garden where there was a precious stūpa. The monk was happy at the sight of the stūpa and stopped to admire it. The emperor asked 'Does the State Master like this stūpa?' The visitor replied: 'It is wonderful!' The emperor said: 'I am willing to offer it to you with reverence.' As the host was giving orders to remove the stūpa to Chang Chou, the monk said: 'There is no need, I can take it away.' After saying this, the monk placed the stūpa in his (long) sleeve, rose in the air and left. The emperor stunned and overjoyed at the same time, praised the unprecedented occurrence.

Dear friends, it is a (wonderful) story indeed and it all came about simply because from the time he left his home, the monk never used his discriminating mind and had a lasting faith in the truth. He did not care for his sister who came to see him, paid no attention to his ragged garments, and did not touch the roll of cloth lying thirteen years in the grotto. We must now ask ourselves if we can undergo our training in such a manner. It would be superfluous to talk about our inability to follow the monk's example when our sisters come to see us. It is enough to mention the attitude we take after our meditation when, while walking, we cannot refrain from gazing at our leader when he offers incense or at our neighbour's movements. If our training is done in this manner, how can our hua t'ou be firmly held?

Dear friends, you have only to remove the mud and retain the water. When the water is clear, automatically the moon will appear.[1] Now it is time to give rise to your hua t'ou and to examine it closely.

The Sixth Day

The ancients said: 'Days and months pass quickly like a shuttle (and) time flies like an arrow.' Our Ch'an week began only the other day and will come to an end tomorrow. According to the standing rule, an examination will be held tomorrow morning, for the purpose of a Ch'an

[1] Water is the symbol of self-nature and the moon of enlightenment.

week is to set a time limit for experiencing (the truth). By experiencing, it means awakening to and realization (of the truth). That is to say, the experiencing of one's fundamental self and the realization of the Tathāgata's profound nature. This is called the experiencing and realization (of the truth).

Your examination is for the purpose of ascertaining the extent to which you have reached attainment during these seven days and you will have to disclose your achievement to the assembly. Usually this examination is called the collection of (the bill of) fare[1] from all of you. (This means that) you must all appear for this examination. In other words, all of you must be awakened (to the truth) so that you can expound the Buddha Dharma for the liberation of all the living. Today, I am not saying I expect that you must all be awakened to the truth. If even one of you is awakened, I can (still) collect this bill of fare. That is to say, one person will pay the bill for the meals served to the whole assembly. If all of us develop a skilful and progressive mind in quest of the truth, we will all be awakened to it. The ancients said:

> 'It is easy for a worldly man to win Buddhahood,
> (But) hard indeed is it to bring wrong thinking to an end.'

It is only because of our insatiable desires since the time without beginning that we now drift about in the sea of mortality, within which there are 84,000 passions and all sorts of habits which we cannot wipe out. (In consequence), we are unable to attain the truth and to be like Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who are permanently enlightened and are free from delusion. For this reason, (Master) Lien Ch'ih said:

> It is easy to be caught up in the causes of pollution,[2]
> (But) to earn truth producing karma is most hard.[3]
> If you cannot see behind what can be seen,
> Differentiated are (concurrent) causes,
> (Around you) are but objects which, like gusts of wind,
> Destroy the crop of merits (you have sown).[4]
> The passions of the mind e'er burst in flames,
> Destroying seeds of Bodhi (in the heart).
> If recollection[5] of the truth be as (intense as) passion,

[1] Lit. cost of the dumplings.

[2] Nidāna or cause of pollution, which connects illusion with the karmic miseries of reincarnation.

[3] Good karma which leads to enlightenment.

[4] Accumulation of merits leading to realization of the truth.

[5] Smṛti in Sanskrit.

Buddhahood will quickly be attained.
If you treat others as you treat the self,
All will be settled (to your satisfaction).
If self is not right and others are not wrong,
Lords and their servants will respect each other.
If the Buddha-dharma's constantly before one,
From all passions this is liberation.

How clear and how to the point are these lines! The (word) pollution means (the act of) making unclean. The realm of worldly men is tainted with desires of wealth, sensuality, fame and gain as well as anger and dispute. To them, the two words 'religion' and 'virtue' are only obstacles. Every day, they give way to pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy and long for wealth, honour, glory and prosperity. Because they cannot eliminate worldly passions, they are unable to give rise to a single thought of the truth. In consequence, the grove of merits is ruined and all seeds of Bodhi are destroyed. If they are indifferent to all worldly passions; if they give equal treatment to friends and foes; if they refrain from killing, stealing, committing adultery, lying and drinking intoxicating liquors; if they are impartial to all living beings; if they regard other people's hunger as their own; if they regard other people's drowning as if they get drowned themselves; and if they develop the Bodhi mind, they will be in agreement with the truth and will also be able to attain Buddhahood at a stroke. For this reason, it is said: 'If recollection of the truth be (as intense) as passions, Buddhahood will quickly be attained.' All Buddhas and saints appear in the world to serve the living, by rescuing them from suffering, by bestowing happiness upon them and by aiding them out of pity.

We can practise self-denial as well as compassion for others, thus foregoing all sorts of enjoyment. (If we can do so), no one will have to endure suffering and there will remain nothing that cannot be accomplished. It will follow that we will be able to obtain the full fruit of our reward, in the same manner as a boat rises automatically with the tide. When dealing with others, if you have a compassionate and respectful mind, and are without self-importance, arrogance and deception, they will certainly receive you with respect and courtesy. On the other hand, if you rely on your abilities and are unreasonable, or if you are double-faced aiming only at (your own enjoyment of) sound, form, fame and wealth, the respect with which they may receive you, will not be real. For this reason, Confucius said: 'If you respect others, they will always respect you. If you have sympathy for others, they will always have sympathy for you.'

The Sixth Patriarch said:

'Although their faults are theirs and are not ours, should we discriminate, we too are wrong.'[1]

Therefore, we should not develop a mind which discriminates between right and wrong and between self and others. If we serve other people in the same manner as Buddhas and Bodhisattvas did, we will be able to sow Bodhi seeds everywhere and will reap the most excellent fruits. Thus, passions will never be able to hold us in bondage.

The twelve divisions of the Mahāyāna's Tripiṭaka were expounded by the World Honoured One because of our three poisons, concupiscence, anger and stupidity. Therefore, the aims of the twelve divisions of this Tripiṭaka are: discipline (śīla) imperturbability (samādhi) and wisdom (prajñā). Their purpose is to enable us to wipe out our desires, to embrace (the four infinite Buddha states of mind): kindness (maitrī), pity (karuṇā), joy (muditā)[2] and indifference (upekṣā)[3] and all modes of salvation,[4] to eliminate the delusion of ignorance and the depravity of stupidity, to achieve the virtue of complete wisdom and to embellish the meritorious Dharmakāya. If we can take such a line of conduct, the Lotus treasury[5] will appear everywhere.

Today, most of you who have come for this Ch'an week, are virtuous laymen (upāsakas). You should subdue your minds in an appropriate manner and get rid of all bondages. I will now tell you another kung an so that you can follow the example (given by those mentioned in it). If I do not tell it, I am afraid you will not acquire the Gem and will go home empty-handed, and (at the same time) I will be guilty of a breach of trust. Please listen attentively:

In the T'ang dynasty, there was an upāsaka whose name was P'ang Yun, alias Tao Hsuan, and whose native town was Heng Yang in Hu Nan province. He was originally a Confucian scholar and since his youth, he realized (the futility of) passions and was determined in his search for the truth.

At the beginning of Chen Yuan's reign (A.D. 785–804), he heard of master Shih T'ou's learning and called on him (for instruction). (When

[1] Quotation from a hymn chanted by the Sixth Patriarch—(Cf. *Altar Sūtra*, Chapter II).
[2] Joy on seeing others rescued from suffering.
[3] Rising above these emotions, or giving up all things, e.g. distinctions of friend and foe, love and hate, etc.
[4] The Six Pāramitās are: dāna (charity), śīla (discipline), kṣānti (patience or endurance), vīrya (zeal and progress), dhyāna (meditation) and prajñā (wisdom).
[5] Lotus treasury: Lotus store, or Lotus world, the Pure Land of all Buddhas in their Sambhogakāya, or Reward bodies.

he saw the master), he asked him: 'Who is the man who does not take all dharmas as his companions?'[1] Shih T'ou stretched out his hand to close P'ang Yun's mouth and the visitor immediately understood the move.[2]

One day, Shih T'ou asked P'ang Yun: 'Since you have seen this old man (i.e. me), what have you been doing each day?' P'ang Yun replied: 'If you ask me what I have been doing, I do not know how to open my mouth (to talk about it).' Then he presented the following poem to Shih T'ou:

There is nothing special about what I do each day;
I only keep myself in harmony with it,[3]
Everywhere I neither accept nor reject anything.
Nowhere do I confirm or refute a thing.[4]
Why do people say that red and purple differ?[4]
There's not a speck of dust on the blue mountain.[5]
Supernatural powers and wonder-making works
Are but fetching water and the gathering of wood,[6]

Shih T'ou approved of the poem and asked P'ang Yun: 'Will you join the Saṇgha order or will you remain a layman (upāsaka)?' P'ang Yun replied: 'I will act as I please', and did not shave his head.[7]

Later, P'ang Yun called on (master) Ma Tsu and asked him: 'Who is the man who does not take all dharmas as his companions?' Ma Tsu replied: 'I will tell you this after you have swallowed all the water in the West River.'[8] Upon hearing this, P'ang Yun was instantaneously awakened

[1] In plain English the question means: Who is the man who has no more attachments to things, or the phenomenal?

[2] In Shih T'ou's move, P'ang Yun perceived that which stretched out the hand to close his mouth and became awakened to the self-nature which was invisible and manifested itself by means of its function.

[3] After enlightenment one attends to one's daily task as usual, the only difference being that the mind no longer discriminates and harmonizes with its surroundings.

[4] Mind is now free from all conceptions of duality.

[5] The blue mountain symbolizes that which is immutable and free from dust, or impurities. A misprint occurs in the printed text, so I have followed the ancient version of the story of Upāsaka P'ang Yun.

[6] Carrying water and fetching wood are the functions of that which possesses supernatural powers and accomplishes wonderful works; in other words, the self-nature which is immaterial and invisible, can be perceived only by means of its functions which are no longer discriminative.

[7] He did not join the Saṇgha order.

[8] The one who has no more attachment to worldly things is the enlightened self-nature which is beyond description. Ma Tsu gave this reply, because when one attains enlightenment, his body or substance pervades everywhere and contains everything, including the West River which is likened to a speck of dust inside the immense universe; he knows everything and does not require any description of himself.—A misprint in the text has been corrected.

to the profound doctrine. He stayed two years at the monastery (of Ma Tsu).

Since his complete realization of his fundamental nature, the Upasaka gave up all worldly occupations, dumped into the Hsiang River his whole fortune amounting to 10,000 strings of gold and silver (coins) and made bamboo-ware to earn his living.

One day, while chatting with his wife on the doctrine of the unborn, the Upāsaka said: 'Difficult! Difficult! Difficult! (It is like unpacking and) distributing ten loads of sesame seeds on the top of a tree.'[1]

His wife interjected: 'Easy! Easy! Easy! A hundred blades of grass are the masters' indication.'[2]

Hearing their dialogue, their daughter Ling Chao said laughingly: 'Oh, you two old people! How can you talk like that?' The Upāsaka said to his daughter: 'What, then, would you say?' She replied: 'It is not difficult! And it is not easy! When hungry one eats and when tired one sleeps.'[3]

P'ang Yun clapped his hands, laughed and said: 'My son will not get a wife; my daughter will not have a husband. We will all remain together to speak the language of the un-born.'[4] Since then, his dialectic powers became eloquent and forcible and he was admired everywhere.

When the Upāsaka left (master) Yo Shan, the latter sent ten Ch'an monks to accompany him to the front door (of the monastery). Pointing his finger at the falling snow, the Upāsaka said to them: 'Good snow! The flakes do not fall elsewhere.' A Ch'an monk named Ch'uan asked him: 'Where do they fall?' The Upāsaka slapped the monk in the face, and Ch'uan said: 'You can't act so carelessly.' The Upāsaka replied: 'What a Ch'an monk you are! The god of the dead will not let you pass.' Ch'uan asked: 'Then what does the (Venerable) Upāsaka mean?' The Upāsaka

[1] The Patriarchs' doctrine was very profound and was as difficult to teach as the unpacking and distributing of sesame seeds on the top of a tree, an impossible thing for an unenlightened man.

[2] In order to wipe out the conception of difficulty, the wife said the doctrine was easy to expound for even the dewdrops on blades of grass were used by eminent masters to give the direct indication of *that which* saw these dewdrops. This was only easy for enlightened people.

[3] If it is said that the doctrine is difficult to understand, no one will try to learn it. If it is said that it is easy to understand, people will take it as easy and never attain the truth. So the daughter took the middle way by saying that it was neither difficult nor easy. Her idea was that one who is free from discrimination and who eats when hungry and sleeps when tired, is precisely the one meant by eminent masters. Therefore, the doctrine is not difficult for an enlightened man and not easy for an unenlightened man, thus wiping out the two extremes which have no room in the absolute.

[4] This sentence is omitted in the Chinese text and is added here to be in accord with Master Hsu Yun's lecture.

slapped him again and said: 'You see like the blind and you talk like the dumb.'[1]

The Upāsaka used to frequent places where sūtras were explained and commented on. One day, he listened to the expounding of the Diamond Sūtra, and when the commentator came to the sentence on the non-existence of ego and personality, he asked: '(Venerable) Sir, since there is neither self nor other, who is now expounding and who is listening?' As the commentator could not reply, the Upāsaka said: 'Although I am a layman, I comprehend something.' The commentator asked him: 'What is the (Venerable) Upāsaka's interpretation?' The Upāsaka replied with the following poem:

There is neither ego nor personality,
Who is distant then and who is intimate?
Take my advice and quit your task of comment
Since that cannot compare with the direct quest of the truth.
The nature of the Diamond Wisdom
Contains no foreign dust.[2]
The words 'I hear', 'I believe' and 'I receive'
Are meaningless and used expediently.

After hearing the poem, the commentator was delighted (with the correct interpretation) and praised (the Upāsaka).

One day, the Upāsaka asked Ling Chao: 'How do you understand the ancients' saying: "Clearly there are a hundred blades of grass; clearly these are the Patriarchs' indication?" ' Ling Chao replied: 'Oh you old man, how can you talk like that?' The Upāsaka asked her: 'How would you say it?' Ling Chao replied: 'Clearly there are a hundred blades of grass; clearly these are the Patriarchs' indication.'[3] The Upāsaka laughed (approvingly).

[1] All Ch'an masters had compassion for unenlightened people and never missed a chance to enlighten them. Yo Shan sent ten Ch'an monks to accompany the eminent visitor to the front of the monastery so that they could learn something from him. Out of pity, the Upāsaka said: 'Good snow! The flakes do not fall elsewhere!', to probe the ability of the monks and to press them hard so that they could realize their self-minds for the attainment of Buddhahood. However, the monks seemed ignorant and did not realize that since the mind created the snow, the snow could not fall outside the mind. If they could only perceive *that which* slapped the unenlightened monk in the face, they would realize their self-nature. A serious monk would, under the circumstances, devote all his attention to inquiring into the unreasonable conduct of the visitor and would at least make some progress in his training.

[2] i.e. free from external impurities.

[3] The daughter seemed at first to criticize her father and then repeated the same sentence to confirm what he had said. Similar questions and answers are found frequently in Ch'an texts where Ch'an masters wanted to probe their disciples' abilities by first criticizing what they said. Any hesitation on the part of the disciples would disclose that they only repeated others' sayings without comprehending them. This was like a trap set to catch unenlightened disciples who claimed that they had realized the truth. When a disciple was really enlightened, he would remain undisturbed and would ask back the question. When the master was satisfied that the disciple's understanding was genuine, he would simply repeat the same sentence to give more emphasis to what the disciple had said.

(When he knew that) he was about to die, he said to Ling Chao: '(Go out and) see if it is early or late; if it is noon, let me know.' Ling Chao went out and returned, saying: 'The sun is in mid-heaven, but unfortunately is being swallowed by the heaven-dog[1]. (Father) why don't you go out to have a look?' Thinking that her story was true, he left his seat and went outside. Thereupon, Ling Chao (taking advantage of her father's absence) ascended to his seat, sat with crossed legs and with her two palms brought together, and passed away.

When the Upāsaka returned, he saw that Ling Chao had died and said, with a sigh: 'My daughter was sharp-witted and left before me.' So he postponed his death for a week, (in order to bury his daughter).

When magistrate Yu Ti came to inquire after his health, the Upāsaka said to him:

> Vow only to wipe out all that is;
> Beware of making real what is not.[1]
> Life in this (mortal) world
> A shadow is, an echo.

After saying this, he rested his head on the magistrate's knees and passed away. As willed by him, his body was cremated and the ashes were thrown into the lake.

His wife heard of his death and went to inform her son of it. Upon hearing the news, the son (stopped his work in the field), rested his chin on the handle of his hoe and passed away in a standing position. After witnessing these three successive events, the mother retired (to an unknown place) to live in seclusion.

As you see, the whole family of four had supernatural powers and could do works of wonder and these laymen who were also upāsakas like you, were of superior attainments. At present, it is impossible to find men of such outstanding ability not only among you upāsakas (and upāsikās) but also among monks and nuns who are no better than myself, Hsu Yun. What a disgrace!

Now let us exert outselves again in our training!

[1] i.e. eclipse of the sun.

[1] Existence and non-existence are two extremes which should be wiped out before one can attain the absolute reality.

Dear friends, allow me to congratulate you for the merits you have accumulated in the Ch'an week which comes to an end today. According to the standing rule, those of you who have experienced and realized (the truth) should come forward in this hall as did candidates who sat for a scholar's examination held previously in the imperial palace. Today, being the day of posting the list of successful graduates, should be one for congratulations. However, (the venerable) abbot has been most compassionate and (has decided to) continue this Ch'an meeting for another week so that we can all make additional efforts for further progress (in self-cultivation).

All the masters who are present here and are old hands in this training, know that it is a wonderful opportunity for co-operation and will not throw away their precious time. But those who are beginners, should know that it is difficult to acquire a human body[1] and that the question of birth and death is important. As we have human bodies, we should know that it is difficult to get the chance to hear the Buddha Dharma and meet learned teachers. Today you have come to the 'precious mountain'[2] and should take advantage of this excellent opportunity to make every possible effort (in your self-cultivation) in order not to return home empty-handed.

As I have said, our Sect's Dharma which was transmitted by the World Honoured One when he held up a flower to show it to the assembly, has been handed down from one generation to another. Although Ānanda was a cousin of the Buddha and left home to follow him as an attendant, he did not succeed in attaining the truth in the presence of the World Honoured One. After the Buddha had entered nirvāṇa, his great disciples assembled in a cave (to compile sūtras) but Ānanda was not permitted by them to attend the meeting. Mahākāśyapa said to him: 'You have not acquired the World Honoured One's Mind Seal, so please pull down the banner-pole in front of the door.' Thereupon, Ānanda was thoroughly enlightened. Then Mahākāśyapa transmitted to

[1] i.e. to be reborn in the human world. The realm of human beings is difficult of attainment; it is one of suffering and is the most suitable for self-cultivation, for human beings have more chance to study the Dharma in order to get rid of their miseries. The other five worlds of existence either enjoy too much happiness (devas and asuras) or endure too much suffering (animals, hungry ghosts and hells), thus having no chance to learn the Dharma.

[2] The Sūtra of Contemplation of Mind says: 'Like a handless man who cannot acquire anything in spite of his arrival at the precious mountain, one who is deprived of the "hand" of Faith, will not acquire anything even if he finds the Triple Gem.'

him the Tathāgata's Mind Seal, making him the second Indian Patriarch. The transmission was handed down to following generations, and after the Patriarchs Aśvaghoṣa and Nāgārjuna, Ch'an master Hui Wen of T'ien T'ai mountain in the Pei Ch'i dynasty (A.D. 550–78) after reading (Nāgārjuna's) Mādhyamika Śāstra, succeeded in realizing his own mind and founded the T'ien T'ai School.[1] At the time, our Ch'an Sect was very flourishing. Later, when the T'ien T'ai School fell into decadence, State master Teh Shao (a Ch'an master) journeyed to Korea (where the only copy of Chih I's works existed), copied it and returned to revive the Sect.

Bodhidharma who was the twenty-eighth Indian Patriarch, came to the East where he became the first (Chinese) Patriarch. From his transmission (of the Dharma) until the (time of the) Fifth Patriarch, the Mind-lamp shone brilliantly. The Sixth Patriarch had forty-three successors among whom were (the eminent) Ch'an masters Hsing Szu and Huai Jang. Then came (Ch'an master) Ma Tsu who had eighty-three successors. At the time, the Right Dharma reached its zenith and was held in reverence by emperors and high officials. Although the Tathāgata expounded many Dharmas, the Sect's was the unsurpassed one.

As to the Dharma which consists in repeating only the name of Amitābha (Buddha), it was extolled by (Ch'an Patriarchs) Aśvaghoṣa and Nāgārjuna,[2] and after master Hui Yuan,[3] Ch'an master Yen Shou of the Yung Ming monastery became the Sixth Patriarch of the Pure Land Sect (Chin T'u Tsung), which was subsequently spread by many other Ch'an masters.

After being propagated by Ch'an master I Hsing, the Esoteric Sect[4] spread to Japan but disappeared in China where there was no one to succeed to the master.

[1] The nine Patriarchs of the T'ien T'ai sect are: (1) Nāgārjuna, (2) Hui Wen of the Pei Ch'i dynasty, (3) Hui Ssu of Nan Yo, (4) Chih Che, or Chih I, (5) Kuan Ting of Chang An, (6) Fa Hua, (7) T'ien Kung, (8) Tso Ch'i and (9) Chan Jan of Ching Ch'i. The 10th, Tao Sui was considered a patriarch in Japan, because he was the teacher of (the Japanese) Dengyo Daishi who brought the Tendai system to that country in the ninth century. The T'ien T'ai (or Tendai in Japanese) Sect bases its tenets on the Lotus, Mahāparinirvāṇa and Mahāprajñāpāramitā Sūtras. It maintains the identity of the Absolute and the world of phenomena, and attempts to unlock the secrets of all phenomena by means of meditation.

[2] The 12th and 14th Patriarchs of the Ch'an sect respectively. Readers will notice that these two Patriarchs and many other Ch'an masters were not sectarian and extolled also the Pure Land School which was also a Dharma door expounded by the Buddha.

[3] Hui Yuan was an eminent master of the Pure Land Sect.

[4] Chen Yen Tsung, also called 'True Word' Sect, or Shingon in Japanese. The founding of this Sect is attributed to Vairocana, through Bodhisattva Vajrasattva, then through Nāgārjuna to Vajramati and to Amoghavajra.

The Dharmalakṣaṇa Sect[1] was introduced by Dharma master Hsuan Tsang but did not last very long.

Only our (Ch'an) Sect (is like a stream) which is still flowing from its remote source bringing devas into its fold and subduing dragons and tigers[2].

Lu Tung Pin, alias Shun Yang, a native of Ching Ch'uan, was one of the (famous) group of eight immortals.[3] Towards the end of the T'ang dynasty, he stood thrice for the scholar's examination but failed each time. Being disheartened, he did not return home, and one day, he met by chance in a wine-shop at Ch'ang An, an immortal named Chung Li Ch'uan who taught him the method of lengthening his span of life infinitely. Lu Tung Pin practised the method with great success and could even become invisible and fly in the air at will all over the country. One day, he paid a flying visit to the Hai Hui monastery on Lu Shan mountain; in its bell tower, he wrote on the wall:

> (After) a day of leisure when the body is at ease,
> The six organs[4] (now) in harmony, announce that all is well.
> With a gem in the pubic region[5] there's no need to search for truth,
> When mindless of surroundings, there's no need for Ch'an.

Some time later, as he was crossing the Huang Lung mountain, he beheld (in the sky) purple clouds shaped like an umbrella. Guessing that there must be some extraordinary person (in the monastery there), he entered it. It happened at the same time that in the monastery, after beating the drum, (Ch'an master) Huang Lung was ascending to his seat (to expound the Dharma). Lu Tung Pin followed the monks and entered the hall to listen to the teaching.

[1] The Dharmalakṣaṇa Sect is called Fa Hsiang in Chinese and Hossō in Japanese. This school was established in China on the return of Hsuan Tsang, consequent on his translation of the Yogācārya works. Its aim is to understand the principle underlying the nature and characteristics of all things.

[2] Maleficent beings.

[3] The immortals practise Taoism and sit in meditation with crossed legs. Their aim is to achieve immortality by putting an end to all passions, but they still cling to the view of the reality of ego and things. They live in caves or on the tops of mountains and possess the art of becoming invisible. A Chinese bhikṣu who is a friend of mine, went to North China when he was still young. Hearing of an immortal there, he tried to locate him. After several unsuccessful attempts, he succeeded finally in meeting him. Kneeling upon his knees, my friend implored the immortal to give him instruction. The latter, however, refused saying that the visitor was not of his line, i.e. Taoism. When the young man got up and raised his head, the immortal had disappeared and only a small sheet of paper was seen on the table with the word 'Good-bye' on it.

[4] According to the ancients, the six viscera are: heart, lungs, liver, kidney, stomach and gall-bladder.

[5] Pubic region, two and a half inches below the navel, on which concentration is fixed in Taoist meditation.

Huang Lung said to the assembly: 'Today there is here a plagiarist of my Dharma; the old monk (i.e. I) will not expound it.' Thereupon, Lu Tung Pin came forward and paid obeisance to the master, saying: 'I wish to ask the Venerable Master the meaning of these lines:

A grain of corn contains the Universe:
The hills and rivers (fill) a small cooking-pot.'

Huang Lung scolded him and said: 'What a corpse-guarding devil (you are).' Lu Tung Pin retorted: 'But my gourd holds the immortality-giving medicine.' Huang Lung said: 'Even if you succeed in living 80,000 aeons[1], you will not escape from falling into the dead void.' Forgetting all about the (fortitude advocated in his own line:)

' When mindless of surroundings there's no need for Ch'an.'

Lu Tung Pin burned with anger and threw his sword at Huang Lung. Huang Lung pointed his finger at the sword which fell to the ground and which the thrower could not get back. With deep remorse, Lu Tung Pin knelt upon his knees and inquired about the Buddha Dharma. Huang Lung asked: 'Let aside (the line:) "The hills, and rivers (fill) a small cooking-pot" about which I do not ask you anything. (Now) what is the meaning of: "A grain of corn contains the Universe"?'[2] Upon hearing this (question), Lu Tung Pin instantaneously realized the profound (Ch'an) meaning. Then, he chanted the following repentance-poem:

I throw away my gourd and smash my lute.
In future I'll not cherish gold in mercury.
Now that I have met (the master) Huang Lung,
I have realized my wrong use of the mind.[3]

This is the story of an immortal's return to and reliance on the Triple Gem and his entry into the monastery (Saṅghārāma) as a guardian of the

[1] The digit 8 in 80,000 symbolizes the 8th Consciousness (Vijñāna) which is an aspect of the self-nature under delusion. The sentence means that Lu Tung Pin was still unenlightened in spite of his long life.

[2] The grain of corn is created by the mind and reveals the mind which is immense and contains the whole Universe, also a creation of the mind. Being hard pressed, Lu Tung Pin instantly realized his self-mind and was awakened to the real.

[3] In ancient times, Taoists in China claimed to be able to 'extract quicksilver by smelting cinnabar', i.e. they knew the method which enabled them to become immortals, or Ṛṣis, in Sanskrit, whose existence was mentioned by the Buddha in the Śūraṇgama Sūtra. Their meditation aimed at the production of a hot current pervading all parts of the body and successful meditators could send out their spirits to distant places. They differed from Buddhists in that they held the conception of the reality of ego and of dharmas, and could not attain complete enlightenment. They used to wander in remote places, equipped with a gourd, a guitar and a 'divine' sword to protect themselves against demons. Today, adherents of the Taoist Sect are still found in great number in the Far East.

Dharma. Lu Tung Pin was also responsible for reviving the Taoist Sect at the time and was its Fifth (Tao) Patriarch in the North. The Taoist Tzu Yang also realized the mind after reading the (Buddhist) collection 'Tsu Ying Chi' and became the Fifth (Tao) Patriarch in the South.[1] Thus the Tao faith was revived thanks to the Ch'an Sect.

Confucius' teaching was handed down until Mencius after whom it came to an end. In the Sung dynasty Confucian scholars (also) studied the Buddha Dharma, and among them, (we can cite) Chou Lien Ch'i who practised the Ch'an training and succeeded in realizing his mind, and others such as Ch'eng Tzu, Chang Tzu and Chu Tzu (all famous Confucians). Therefore, the Ch'an Sect contributed (in no small measure) to the revival of Confucianism.

Nowadays, there are many people who despise the Ch'an Dharma and who even make slanderous remarks about it, thus deserving hell.[2] Today, we have this excellent opportunity of being favoured with a co-operating cause (which gathers us here). We should feel joy and should take the great vow to become objects of reverence for dragons and devas and to perpetuate the Right Dharma for ever. This is no child's play; so please make strenuous efforts to obtain more progress in your self-cultivation.

[1] Tzu Yang was an eminent Taoist who was well-versed in the Ch'an Dharma and his works attested his realization of the mind. Emperor Yung Cheng considered him a real Ch'an Buddhist and published his works in 'The Imperial Selection of Ch'an Sayings'.

[2] An evil karma which causes the sinner to be reborn in the Avīci hell. Lit: committing the Avīci-karma.

The First Day

My coming here has already caused much inconvenience to the monastery and I do not deserve the generous hospitality extended to me by the (Venerable) Abbot and group leaders. Today, I am again asked to preside over this (second Ch'an) week. I must say I am not qualified to do so. It is quite logical that the (venerable) old Dharma master Ying Tz'u who is advanced in age and Dharma years[1] should preside over this meeting. There are also in this monastery many learned and virtuous Dharma masters. I am only 'duckweed' floating on water[2] and am, therefore, a completely useless man. It would be wrong to say that I am accorded priority and courtesy because of my age.[3] Even, in the world-dharma,[4] no consideration is given to the question of age. Formerly, when the scholar's examination was held in the imperial palace, no matter whether a candidate was young or old, he called the examiner 'my old teacher' for the latter was respected (because of his rank and) not because of his age. In the Buddha Dharma also, no consideration is given to age. (I cite) Mañjuśrī Bodhisattva who very long ago attained Buddhahood and was the teacher of sixteen princes, one of whom was Amitābha Buddha. Śākyamuni Buddha was also his disciple, but when Śākyamuni Buddha attained Buddhahood, Mañjuśrī came to assist him (in teaching his disciples). Thus we know there is only One equality which is neither high nor low. Therefore, please make no mistake about all this.

As we are learning (the Dharma), we should respect (and observe) the rules and regulations (set up for the purpose). The (Venerable) Abbot has in mind the enlightenment of others, the expounding of sūtras, the holding of Ch'an meetings and the spreading of the Buddha Dharma. This is indeed a very rare opportunity.

All of you have been braving the cares and confusion of travel and

[1] The Dharma age of a monk is the number of summer or discipline years since his ordination.

[2] i.e. a man of no fixed abode. Master Hsu Yun had come from the Yun Men monastery in South China and did not yet know where he was going to settle. The Yun Men monastery was that of Ch'an master Yun Men, founder of the Yun Men Sect, one of the five Ch'an Sects in China. The monastery was rebuilt by master Hsu Yun.

[3] Master Hsu Yun was then 114 years old.

[4] World-dharma or worldly affairs.

giving yourselves a great deal of trouble to come of your own accord to attend this retreat. This shows that you have in mind the rejection of passions and desire of quiet.

In reality, you and I have only one mind but because of the difference between delusion and enlightenment, there are living beings who are busy from morning till evening without a day of rest. If we give some thought to this (state of things), we will see that no advantage can come from it. In spite of this, there are people who are busy all day long foolishly thinking of an abundance of food and clothing for themselves and anxious to find pleasure in singing and dancing. They want their children and grandchildren to have wealth and fame and their descendants to enjoy glory and prosperity. Even when they are about to breathe their last to become ghosts, they still think of protection and prosperity for their children. These people are really foolish and stupid.

There are also people who know something about good and evil and about cause and effect. They do meritorious acts which consist only in holding Buddhist ceremonies, in giving offerings to monks, in commissioning statues of Buddhas and in repairing temples and monastic buildings. Their acts contribute to the worldly[1] cause, and they hope to be rewarded with happiness in the next rebirth. Because they do not know anything about the passionless merits which are unsurpassed, they do not perform them. The Lotus Sūtra says: 'Sitting in meditation (even) for a short while is better than erecting as many seven treasure stūpas as the sandgrains in the Ganges.' For this method of sitting in meditation will enable us to wipe out our passions and to have peace of mind and body, resulting in the complete realization of the self-nature with liberation from birth and death. By 'a short while', it means a moment as short as an instant (kṣaṇa).[2] If one cleanses and purifies his mind and turns the light inwards on himself, his sitting in meditation even for an instant will (at least) enable him to sow the direct[3] cause of attainment of Buddhahood, if it does not ensure the (immediate) realization of the truth. His ultimate achievement can be expected (sooner or later). If his training is effective, Buddhahood can be attained in an instant. For this reason, Ānanda said in the Śūraṇgama Sūtra: 'The Dharmakāya can be realized without having to pass through countless aeons (kalpas).'[4]

[1] Worldly cause, or āsrava in Sanskrit, meaning 'leaking' cause; inside the passion-stream as contrasted with anāsrava, outside the passion-stream; no drip or leak.

[2] Kṣaṇa = the shortest measure of time, as kalpa or aeon, is the longest. 60 kṣaṇas equal a finger-snap, 90 a thought and 4,500 a minute.

[3] Direct cause, a true, as compared with a contributory, cause.

[4] Asaṅkhya in Sanskrit, or innumerable aeons.

However, you and I, and all other people in general, live in the midst of passions, of joy and anger, of gain and loss, of the five desires[1] and pursuits of pleasure and enjoyment. All these things are no more seen and heard as soon as we step into this Ch'an hall where our six senses are exactly like the black tortoise's six (vulnerable) parts which shrink into its shell and where nothing can disturb your minds. This is the practice of the passionless Dharma and (is also) the passionless Dharma (itself). Therefore, the merits derived from the erection of as many seven treasure stūpas as the sandgrains in the Ganges cannot be compared with those resulting from a moment spent sitting in meditation. The simile of the black tortoise comes from the (story of) the fish-eating seal which swam to catch the tortoise on the seashore. Seeing that it was attacked, the tortoise withdrew its head, tail and legs into its shell, so evading the seal's efforts to bite it.[2]

In this world, when we have no money, we are worried about our food and clothing, and when we have money, we cannot free ourselves from passions. We are thus caught and eaten by the seal. If we know of the danger to which we are exposed, we should bring our six senses under control and turn the light inwards on ourselves so that we can be liberated from mortality. Two days ago, I talked on our Sect's Dharma, dealing with the Right Dharma Eye, the Tathāgata's Mind-dharma and the basis of liberation from birth and death. Other Dharma doors[3] including the expounding of sūtras, in spite of their aims which are the arousing of faith and understanding, are only accessories[4] and do not advance the perfect (experiential) understanding. If the sūtra expounding Dharma is used to ensure liberation from birth and death, there must still be (two complementary phases) to pass through: practice and witnessing which are very difficult to achieve. For this reason, very few cases have been recorded of those who listened to the expounding of sūtras or followed other Dharma doors and who thereby attained instantaneously complete enlightenment and acquired transcendental powers. These cases were few as compared with those in the Ch'an Sect. According to our Sect, not only Ch'an monks and laymen (upāsakas) possessed

[1] The five desires arising from the objects of the five senses, things seen, heard, smelt, tasted and touched.

[2] This parable is frequently used in Buddhist Scriptures to advise us to shut the six gates of our senses so as to be detached from external surroundings.

[3] Dharma doors to enlightenment or methods of realizing the self-nature.

[4] Lit. leaves and branches in literary forms, i.e. accessories not fundamental in the experiential realization of the real. On the other hand, the Ch'an Sect aims at the direct pointing at the Buddha nature which every living being possesses and the instantaneous realization of the mind leading to the attainment of Buddhahood.

the inconceivable device, but Ch'an nuns were also of outstanding abilities.

Ch'an master Kuan Ch'i was a disciple of Lin Chi[1] but did not realize the truth in spite of having stayed several years at his master's monastery. One day, he (left his master) to call at other places (for instruction). When he arrived at a nunnery on Mo Shan mountain, a little nun reported his arrival to (Ch'an Bhikṣuṇī) Mo Shan who sent her attendant to ask him this question; 'Venerable Master, do you come here for sightseeing or for learning the Buddha Dharma?' Kuan Ch'i replied that he came for learning the Buddha Dharma. Mo Shan said: 'If you come for the Buddha Dharma, there are here also rules about beating the drum and ascending to the seat.' Thereupon, she ascended to her seat, but Kuan Ch'i bowed only and did not kneel down. Mo Shan asked him: 'What place did the Venerable Bhikṣu leave today?' He replied: 'I left the entrance to the road.' She asked him: 'Why didn't you cover it up?'[2] Kuan Ch'i could not reply and knelt down (to pay his respects), asking: 'What is Mo Shan?' She replied: 'The top of the head is not exposed.'[3] He asked: 'Who is the owner of Mo Shan (mountain)?' She replied: 'He is neither male nor female.' He shouted: 'Why does he not transform himself?' She asked back: 'He is neither a ghost nor a spirit, into what should he transform himself?'[4] He could not reply and submitted to her authority. He became a gardener at the nunnery where he stayed three years during which he was completely enlightened.

(Later) when Kuan Ch'i went to the Ch'an hall (to instruct his own disciples), he said to them: 'When I was at my father Lin Chi's place, I got a half-ladle (and) when I was at my mother Mo Shan's, I got another half-ladle, thus obtaining a full ladle which has enabled me to satisfy my hunger up to now.' Thus, although Kuan Ch'i was Lin Chi's disciple, he was also Mo Shan's Dharma successor.

[1]Founder of the Lin Chi Sect.

[2] Mo Shan's question means: If you think you are really enlightened and can dispense with kneeling, you should have realized your Dharmakāya which pervades everywhere and covers also the entrance to the road, for it is free from coming or going, and does not leave one place to come to another.

[3] The question: 'What is Mo Shan?' means: 'What is the state of the enlightened mind in the Mo Shan nunnery?' The questioner wanted a description of the Bodhi mind. The nun's reply refers to the small lump on the top of the Buddha's head which could not be seen by his disciples. Mo Shan meant that since the visitor was unenlightened, he could not perceive her Dharmakāya which was indescribable.

[4] When Kuan Ch'i asked about the owner of Mo Shan, i.e. about herself, she replied that the owner was neither male nor female for sex had nothing to do with enlightenment, and the Dharmakāya was neither male nor female. Generally, women had many more handicaps than men, and Kuan Ch'i seemed to look down upon her because of her sex and asked her why she did not change herself into a man if she was enlightened. His question showed that he was still under delusion.

We can see that among the nuns, there existed also people of real ability. There are many nuns here as well; why do not they come forward to show their abilities and reveal the Right Dharma on behalf of their predecessors? The Buddha Dharma extols equality (of sex) and we are only required to make efforts in our training without backsliding so as not to miss this (rare) opportunity.

The ancients said:

> In one hundred years or six and thirty thousand days[1],
> There is not a quiet moment to lay down mind and body.

For countless aeons, we have been floating in the sea of mortality because we have never wanted to lay down our bodies and minds in order to have quiet for our learning and self-cultivation, with the result that we have been turned round by the wheel of transmigration without a chance of liberation. For this reason, all of us should lay down both body and mind and sit in meditation for a moment with the hope that the bottom of the cask of (black) lacquer will drop off and that we will together experience the law of no-birth.[2]

The Second Day

This is the second day of the second Ch'an week. The increasing number of those who come to this meeting shows how really good-hearted are the people of Shanghai and the excellence of their blessed virtues. It also indicates every man's aversion to disturbance (caused by passions) and longing for the quiet (found in meditation), and every man's desire to escape from sorrow and to seek happiness. Generally speaking, there is more suffering than happiness in this world and, as time passes very quickly, the short space of several decades slips away in the twinkling of an eye. Even if one can live 800 years like Peng Tsu,[3] this space of time

[1] The maximum life span of each individual.

[2] In Ch'an parlance, our ignorance is symbolized by the thick black lacquer contained in a wooden cask, because nothing can be seen through it. Ch'an training will cause the bottom of the cask to drop off, thus emptying it of the black lacquer, i.e. our body and mind of delusion. This is the moment when we can perceive the real.

Law of no-birth: lit. endurance leading to the personal experiencing of the law of no-birth, or immortality, i.e. the absolute which is beyond birth and death, boundless patience or endurance being required for subduing the wandering mind.

[3] The Methuselah of China.

is (still) short in the eye of the Buddha Dharma. However, worldly men who can reach the age of seventy are rarely seen. Since you and I know that this short length of time is like an illusion and a transformation, and is really not worth our attachment (to it), we have come to this Ch'an week and this is certainly due to our having grown good roots in our former transmigrations.

This method of (self-) cultivation requires an enduring mind. Formerly, all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas reached their goal after spending many aeons in self-cultivation. The Śūraṅgama Sūtra's chapter on Avalokiteśvara's Complete Enlightenment says:

'I remember that long before the elapsing of as uncountable a number of aeons as there are sandgrains in the Ganges a Buddha by the name of Avalokiteśvara appeared in the world. At that time I developed the Bodhi mind and for my entry into Samādhi was instructed by Him to practise (self-) cultivation through (the faculty of) hearing.'

From the above statement, we can see that Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva did not achieve his goal in one or two days. At the same time, he clearly told us about the method of his training. He was head (of the group of) twenty-five 'Great Ones' who attained complete enlightenment. His method consisted of (self-) cultivation of the ear which enabled him to transmute the faculty of hearing into perfection which led to (the state of) Samādhi. Samādhi means the (state of) undisturbedness. Therefore, he continued:

(I) 'At the start, by directing the hearing (ear)
Into the stream (of meditation), this organ became detached from its object.'

This method consists in turning the hearing inwards (on the self-nature) to hear the self-nature so that the six senses will not (wander outside to) be in touch with the six external objects. This is the collection of the six senses into the Dharma nature.[1] Therefore, he continued:

(II) 'By wiping out (the concept of) both sound and stream-entry,
Both disturbance and stillness
Became clearly non-existent.'

He said again:

(III) 'Thus advancing step by step,
Both hearing and its object came to an end.
But I did not stop where they ended.'

[1]Dharmata in Sanskrit, i.e. the nature underlying all things, the Bhutatathata.

He meant that we should not allow our training, by turning our hearing inwards (on the self-nature) to come to a halt; he wanted us to move forward little by little and to make additional efforts to reach (another stage about which he said as follows:)

(IV) 'When the awareness (of this state) and this state itself (were realized) as non-existent,
The awareness of voidness became all-embracing
After the elimination of both subject and object relating to voidness.
Then the disappearance of both creation and annihilation
(Resulted in) the state of Nirvāṇa becoming manifest.'

This state results from the training which consists in turning the ear inwards to hear the self-nature and after all kinds of creation and annihilation are realized as non-existent, the true mind will manifest itself. This is the (meaning of the saying:) 'When the mad mind is brought to a halt, it is Bodhi (i.e. perfect wisdom)'.

After attaining this stage, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva said:

'Suddenly I leaped over both the mundane and supramundane and realized an all-embracing brightness pervading the ten directions, acquiring two unsurpassed (merits). The first one was in accord with the fundamental Profound Enlightened Mind of all Buddhas high up in the ten directions, possessing the same merciful power as the Tathāgata. The second one was in sympathy with all living beings in the six realms of existence, here below in the ten directions, sharing with them the same imploration of pity.'

Today, in our study of the Buddhist doctrine for our (self-) cultivation, we should first succeed in our training by liberating all the living beings of our self-nature such as concupiscence, anger, stupidity and arrogance and by realizing the fundamentally pure and clean Profound Enlightened Real Mind.[1] Only then can we perform the Buddha work high above for the salvation of living beings here below, as did Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva who could manifest in thirty-two different forms, each being suitable for the liberation of the corresponding individual, and only then can we possess the required (transcendental) powers. Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva (can) appear in the world as a boy or a girl, but worldly men do not know that he has already attained Buddhahood, has no sex and

[1] The profound enlightenment of Mahāyāna, or self-enlightenment to enlighten others. The 51st and 52nd stages in the enlightenment of a Bodhisattva, or the two supreme forms of Buddha-enlightenment are respectively: (1) Samyak-saṁbodhi, or absolute universal enlightenment, omniscience, and (2) the profound enlightenment of Mahāyāna, or self-enlightenment to enlighten others. The first is the 'cause' and the second is the 'fruit', and a Bodhisattva becomes a Buddha when the 'cause is complete and the fruit is full'.

is neither an ego nor a personality, making a (particular) appearance only in response to each individual potentiality. When worldly men (in China) hear the Bodhisattva's name, thoughts of devotion and reverence for him arise. This is due to the fact that in their former lives, they had repeated his name so that the seeds previously sown in the field of their store-consciousness (ālaya-vijñāna) now develop in them. For this reason, the sūtra says:

'After entering through the hearing,
The Bodhi-seed is sown for ever.'

Today, as we come here for our self-perfuming[1] and self-cultivation, we should rely on the Dharma of the Supreme Vehicle practised and experienced by all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. This Dharma consists in clearly recognizing the fundamental Profound Enlightened Mind; that is to say, the perception of the self-nature leading to the attainment of Buddhahood. If this mind is not recognized, Buddhahood can never be attained. In order to recognize the mind, we should begin with the performance of virtuous deeds. If every day, from morning until evening, we perform all good actions and refrain from committing evil deeds, we will accumulate merits and if in addition we hold a hua t'ou constantly (in our minds), we will be able to realize, in a moment's thought, the state of no-birth and will (thereby) attain Buddhahood instantaneously.

Dear friends, please make a profitable use of your time and do not give rise to wrong thoughts in your minds. Now is the time to give rise to a hua t'ou for your self-cultivation.

Explanatory Note:

When the Buddha expounded the Śūraṅgama Sūtra, he ordered the twenty-five 'enlightened ones' who were present, to talk about the various means by which they had attained enlightenment, so that the assembly could learn something from them. After the statements by twenty-four of the 'enlightened ones' of their realization of the real by means of the six guṇas: (1) sound, (2) sight, (3) smell, (4) taste, (5) touch and (6) idea; the five sense-organs: (7) the eye, (8) nose, (9) tongue, (10) body, and (11) mind; the six perceptions of (12) sight, (13) ear, (14) nose, (15) tongue, (16) body, and (17) faculty of mind; and the seven fundamental elements of (18) fire, (19) earth, (20) water, (21) wind, (22) space, (23) knowledge and (24) perceptibility, Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva declared that he had attained enlightenment by means of (25) the organ of hearing. In order to teach Ānanda and the assembly, the Buddha asked Mañjuśrī for his opinion on these twenty-five

[1] i.e. to be under the beneficial influence of the fragrance of Buddha Dharma.

methods. Mañjuśrī praised the method used by Avalokiteśvara saying that he himself had also used it for his own enlightenment and that it was the most suitable one for human beings.

The following is a commentary on the verses of the Śūraṅgama Sūtra:

(I) At the start, by directing the hearing
Into the stream, this organ became detached from its object.

This was the turning of the ear inwards on the self-nature to hear it so that hearing and its object, i.e. the sound, became detached. When hearing was brought under control in this manner, the other five senses had no chance of wandering outside to get in touch with the corresponding external objects. Stream here means the inward stream of meditation, or correct concentration.

The mind was brought under control to free it from external disturbance. Could it really be controlled by using it to direct the ear inwards to hear the self-nature? The mind was already disturbed when it was directed inwards. Therefore, efforts should be made to free it from disturbance so that stillness can prevail.

(II) By wiping out (the concept of) both sound and stream-entry,
Both disturbance and stillness
Clearly became non-existent.

As the sound and stream were realized to be non-existent, both disturbance and stillness also became non-existent. The mind was thus disentangled from the guṇas, or sensation-data.

(III) Thus advancing step by step,
Both the hearing and its object came to an end;
But I did not stop where they ended.

By making additional efforts I advanced further step by step, until both hearing and sound came completely to an end. However, I did not stop there. Thus the mind was disentangled from the sense-organs. The voidness of which the meditator was aware then appeared. This incomplete or partial awareness should also be wiped out.

(IV) When the awareness (of this state) and this state itself (were realized as) non-existent,
The awareness of voidness became all-embracing,
After the elimination of subject and object relating to voidness.
Then the disappearance of creation and annihilation
(Resulted in) the state of Nirvāṇa becoming manifest.

With further progress, the meditator perceived that both the incomplete awareness (subject) of voidness and the voidness itself (object) were non-existent. After the elimination of both subject and object relating to the false conception of relative voidness, the complete awareness of the absolute voidness became all-embracing, ensuring the end of the dual conception of creation and annihilation

of even subtle phenomena, perceptible only at this last stage of meditation, such as relative voidness and incomplete awareness, which were only creations of the mind. As creation existed only as a relative term and was followed by annihilation, so long as this duality existed, the mind was still held in bondage. Now as this pair of opposites was non-existent, the awareness became complete. When this last stage was reached the resultant state of Nirvāṇa became manifest. This stage ensured the instantaneous leap over both the mundane and supramundane when the meditator attained the all-embracing illumination of absolute wisdom.

Master Han Shan also followed this method and attained Samādhi during his stay on the Five Peaked Mountain. (*See* Han Shan's Autobiography.)

The holding of a hua t'ou also enables a Ch'an student to realize the disentanglement of his mind from guṇas (or external objects), sense-organs, incomplete awareness (or inner subject) and relative voidness for the same purpose of attaining the absolute voidness of complete awareness, or wisdom.

The Third Day

This is the third day of this second Ch'an week. Those who are already familiar with this training, can always control their minds no matter where they may happen to be either in the midst of disturbance or of stillness. To them, there is no difference between the first and second week or between the second and third day. But those who are beginners should endeavour to make progress in their training which they should not undergo in a careless manner, in order not to waste their (precious) time. I will now tell the beginners another story and hope they will listen to it attentively.

In every Ch'an hall, there is (a statue of) a Bodhisattva called the 'Holy Monk'. He was a cousin of the Tathāgata Śākyamuni and his name was Ārya Ājñāta-Kauṇḍinya. When the World Honoured One left home, His father sent three paternal and two maternal clansmen to go with and look after Him in the Himālayas. This cousin was one of the two maternal clansmen. After the World Honoured One had attained enlightenment, He went to the Mṛgadāva park where He expounded the Four Noble Truths and where this cousin was the first disciple awakened to the truth. This cousin was also one of His great disciples and the first to leave home. For this reason, he was called the 'Holy Monk'. He was also known as the Saṅgha Head.[1] His method of self-cultivation is clearly described in the Śūraṅgama Sūtra which says:

[1] Head of the Saṇgha order.

After I had attained enlightenment, I went to the Mṛgadāva park where I declared to Ājñāta-Kauṇḍinya and the other five bhikṣus as well as to you, the four varga,[1] that all living beings failed to realize Enlightenment (Bodhi) and attain Arhatship because they were misled by foreign dust[2] which (entering the mind) caused distress and delusion. What, at the time, caused your awakening (to the truth) for your present attainment of the holy fruit?[3]

This was the Buddha's talk about the cause of our failure to realize Bodhi and to attain Arhatship. He also asked His great disciples in the assembly about the methods they used for their awakening (to the truth). At the time, only Ājñāta-Kauṇḍinya knew this method. So he arose from his seat and replied to the World Honoured One as follows:

I am now a senior in the assembly in which I am the only one who has acquired the art of explaining because of my awakening to (the meaning of) the two words 'foreign dust' which led to my attainment of the (holy) fruit.

After saying this, he gave the following explanation (of these two words) to the World Honoured One:

World Honoured One, (foreign dust) is like a guest who stops at an inn where he passes the night or takes his meal, and as soon as he has done so, he packs and continues his journey because he has no time to stay longer. As to the host of the inn, he has nowhere to go. My deduction is that one who does not stay is a guest and one who does stay is a host. Consequently, a thing is 'foreign' when it does not stay.

Again, in a clear sky, when the sun rises and its light enters (the house) through an opening, the dust is seen moving in the ray of light whereas the empty space is unmoving. Therefore, that which is still is the void and that which moves is the dust.

How clearly he explained the two words 'host' and 'guest'! You should know that this illustration shows us how to begin our training. In other words, the real mind is the host who does not move and the moving guest is our false thinking which is likened to dust. Dust is very fine and dances in the air. It is visible only when the sunlight enters through the door or an opening. This means that false thoughts within our minds are imperceptible in the usual process of thinking. They become perceptible only when we sit in meditation during our training.

[1] The four varga, groups or orders, i.e., Bhikṣu, bhikṣuṇī, upāsaka and upāsikā; monks, nuns, male and female devotees.

[2] Foreign dust: guṅa, in Sanskrit, small particles; molecules, atoms, exhalations; element or matter, which is considered as defilement; an active conditioned principle in nature, minute, subtle and defiling to pure mind; impurities.

[3] Fruit of saintly life, i.e. Bodhi, Nirvāṇa.

In the midst of the unending rise and fall of mixed thoughts and in the tumult of false thinking, if your training is not efficient, you will not be able to act as a host; hence your failure to attain enlightenment and your drifting about in the ocean of birth and death, wherein you are a Smith in your present transmigration and will be a Jones in the next one. Thus you will be exactly like a guest who stops at an inn and will not be able to remain there for ever. However, the true mind does not act in that way; it neither comes nor goes, is not born and does not die. It does not move but remains motionless, hence the host. This host is likened to the immutable voïdness in which the dust dances. It is also like the host of an inn who always stays there for he has nowhere else to go.

Dust is like one of the passions and can be wiped out completely only when one reaches the Bodhisattva-stage. By falsehood, is meant illusion. There are eighty-eight kinds of illusory view and eighty-one of illusory thought. These (misleading) views come from the five stupid temptations,[1] and in self-cultivation, one should wipe out all of them in order to attain the first stage of the Arhat (śrota-āpanna).[2] This is the most difficult thing to do, for the cutting of illusory views is likened to the cutting (or stopping) of the flow of a forty-mile stream. Thus we can see that we should have a great measure of strength in our training. We can attain Arhatship only when we have succeeded in cutting out all misleading thoughts. This kind of self-cultivation is a gradual process.

(In our Ch'an training), we have only to make use of a hua t'ou which should be kept bright and lively and should never be allowed to become blurred and which should always be clearly cognizable. All misleading views and thoughts will thus be cut off (by the hua t'ou) at a single blow leaving behind only something like the cloudless blue sky in which the bright sun will rise. This is the brightness of the self-nature when it manifests itself.

This saint (ārya)[3] was awakened to this truth and recognized the original host. The first step in our training today is to be cognizant of the fact that the foreign dust (or guest) is moving whereas the host is motionless. If this is not clearly understood, we will not know where to begin our training, and will only waste our time as heretofore.

I hope all of you will pay great attention to the above.

[1] The five stupid temptations, or pañca-kleśa, in Sanskrit, i.e. the five dull, unintelligent, or stupid vices or agents: desire, anger or resentment, stupidity or foolishness, arrogance and doubt.

[2] One who has entered the stream of holy living or who goes against the stream of transmigration; the first stage of the Arhat.

[3] Meaning Ājñāta-Kauṇḍinya.

It is very difficult to meet with the unsurpassed Profound Dharma in a hundred, a thousand or ten thousand aeons, and the present opportunity of our gathering for a Ch'an week in this Monastery of the Jade Buddha is really afforded by an unsurpassed co-operating cause. The fact that lay men and women have come from all directions in an increasing number to attend this meeting for the sowing of the direct cause of the attainment of Buddhahood, proves that this opportunity is rarely available.

The Buddha Śākyamuni said in the Lotus Sūtra:

> If men, with minds disturbed,
> Enter a stūpa or a temple
> (And) call: Namo Buddhāya!
> Buddhahood they will attain.

In a short period of several decades, worldly men are not aware of the passing of time. Those who have money, pursue wine, sex and prosperity. Those who have no money, have to work hard for their food, clothing, shelter and travel. Thus (all of them) rarely have a moment's leisure and comfort and their sufferings are beyond description. However, if they happen to enter a Buddhist temple, they will find happiness in the majesty of its quiet. They will behold the statues of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and may repeat at random the Buddha's name; or they may be impressed with the sudden quiet of their (temporarily) purified minds, and praise the Tathāgata's bliss which is so rarely found (elsewhere). All this comes from their having acquired very deep good roots in their former transmigrations and provides the cause of their future attainment of Buddhahood. For, in general, what their eyes want to see is only merry-making; what their ears want to hear is only songs and music, and what their mouths want to taste is only succulent dishes and rare delicacies. All this soils their thinking and this defiled thinking produces a disturbed mind, the deluded mind of birth and death. Now, if, while in a stūpa or temple, one has a chance of calling the Buddha's name, this is the awakened mind, the pure mind and the Bodhi seed leading to attainment of Buddhahood. The Sanskrit word 'Buddha' means the Enlightened One, that is one who is (completely) enlightened and is no more deluded. When the self-nature is pure and clean, one possesses the awakened mind.

Today, we do not come here for fame and wealth and this is our

awakening power which manifests itself. However, many are those who hear of the Ch'an week but do not know anything about its real meaning. They come to see this bustling meeting to satisfy their curiosity and this is (certainly) not the highest mind. Now that you have come to this place, you are like those who arrive at the mountain of precious gems and you should not return empty handed. You should develop the highest Truth-Mind, and sit in meditation during the time of the burning of an incense stick, in order to sow the direct cause of attainment of Buddhahood and to become Buddhas later on.

Formerly, Sākyamuni Buddha had a disciple whose name was Subhadra.[1] He was very poor and was all alone, without anybody to support him. His heart was full of sadness and he wanted to follow the Buddha as his disciple. One day, he went to the World Honoured One's place but it happened that He was not there.

After looking into Subhadra's former transmigrations for the purpose of finding out whether there existed some co-operating cause, the Buddha's great disciples found that in the past 80,000 aeons,[2] he had not planted any good roots. They then decided not to allow him to stay and sent him away. With a heart full of sadness, Subhadra left the place and when he reached a walled town, he thought that if his karma was so bad, it would be better for him to kill himself by knocking his head against the wall. As he was about to commit suicide, the World Honoured One happened to arrive there and asked him about his intention. Subhadra related his story to the World Honoured One who accepted him as His disciple. They returned together to His place where seven days later, Subhadra attained Arhatship. The great disciples who did not know the cause of Subhadra's attainment, asked the World Honoured One about it.

The World Honoured One said to them: 'You only know things which happened in the last 80,000 aeons, but before then Subhadra had already planted good roots. At that time, he was also very poor and gathered firewood as his means of subsistence. One day, he met a tiger on the mountains, and seeing that his escape was cut off, he hurriedly climbed a tree. The tiger saw that he was up the tree which it began to

[1] The last convert of the Buddha, 'a Brahman 120 years old'.

[2] The digit 8 in 80,000 symbolizes the eighth or store (ālaya) consciousness (vijñāna), the deluded aspect of the self-nature. So long as the self-nature is under delusion, it is controlled by the discriminating mind and will never perceive the real which is beyond all numbers. The great disciples did not perceive the unconditioned cause of the attainment of Buddhahood, and saw only worldly events occurring in the former transmigrations of Subhadra. The Buddha who possessed the Sarvajña or All-wisdom, saw clearly his new disciple's cause of Arhatship, which cause being beyond all numbers is inherent in the self-nature.

gnaw to fell it. At the critical moment, as no one came to his rescue, he had a sudden thought of the great enlightened Buddha who possessed the power of compassion and could save all sufferers. Thereupon, he called: "Namo Buddhāya! Come quickly to save me!" Upon hearing the call, the tiger went away and did not harm his life. He thus sowed the direct cause of Buddhahood which became ripe today, hence his attainment of the Arhat-stage.' After hearing the story, all the great disciples were delighted and praised the marvellous (achievement of the poor man).

Today you and I meet here under auspicious circumstances, and if we can sit in meditation during the time of the burning of a (whole) incense stick, our (resultant) good karma will exceed many times the (one narrated in the above story). We should never take this meditation as child's play. If we come here to see a bustling meeting, we will simply miss a very good opportunity.

The Fifth Day

Those of you who have a deep believing mind, are naturally making efforts in their training in this hall. The (venerable) group leaders who are experienced in this self-cultivation, are already familiar with it. However, experienced men must know the interplay of activity (phenomenon) and principle (noumenal).[1] They should probe it exhaustively and make sure that (they experience) the unhindered interdependence of the noumenal and phenomenal and of the immutable and mutable. They should not sit like dead men; they should never be immersed in the void and cling to stillness, with delight in it. If there be delight in the still surrounding and absence of (realization of) the interchange (of practice and theory), this is likened to fish in stagnant water, with no hope of jumping over the Dragon Door.[2] They are also like fish in frozen water (and) this is a fruitless type of training.

[1] i.e. practice and theory; phenomena ever change; the underlying principle, being absolute, neither changes nor acts; it is the Bhūtatathatā. When we see a flag streaming in the wind, we know that, in theory, only the mind moves and not the wind or the flag. In practice, we cannot deny that the wind blows and the flag moves. We know also that in theory mind, wind and flag are but one undivided whole. Now, how can we have an experiential realization of this sameness? If we fail to experience it, we will also fail in our self-cultivation. This is the most important phase of the meditation, which can be achieved only if we put an end to our feelings and discrimination.

[2] In ancient China, it was believed that some fish, especially carp, could jump out of the sea to become dragons. A metaphor meaning that these meditators will never obtain liberation.

In this training, beginners should be earnest (in their desire to escape) birth and death, and should develop a great mortification-mind by laying down all kinds of (productive) causes.[1] Only then, can their training be effective. If they are unable to lay down these causes, the (round of) birth and death will never come to an end. For, since we have been deluded by the seven emotions and six sexual attractions[2] from the time without beginning, we now find ourselves, from morning to evening, in the midst of sounds and forms, without knowing the permanent true-mind, hence our fall into the bitter ocean (of birth and death). As we are now awakened to the fact that there is only suffering in all worldly (situations), we can (certainly) lay down all (our thoughts of) them and (thereby) attain Buddhahood at once.[3]

The Sixth Day

In this Ch'an hall, I have noticed that many male and female participants are only beginners who do not know the (standing) rules and regulations and whose unruly behaviour interferes with the calm meditation of others. However, we are fortunate in that the Venerable Abbot is most compassionate and is doing all he can to help us achieve our religious karma.[4] (Moreover) the group leaders who have developed the unsurpassed mind bent on the right Way, are here to lead us so that we can undergo an appropriate training. This is (indeed) an opportunity rarely available in myriads of aeons.

(Therefore), we should strive resolutely to make further progress in our inner and outer training. In our inner training, we should either concentrate pointedly on the hua t'ou: 'Who is the repeater of Buddha's name?' or repeat the name of Amitābha Buddha,[5] without giving rise to

[1] i.e. all causes including feelings and passions which are productive of effects and contribute to the turning wheel of births and deaths.

[2] The seven emotions are: pleasure, anger, sorrow, joy, love, hate and desire. The six attractions arise from colour, form, carriage, voice or speech, softness or smoothness and features.

[3] Lit. on the spot.

[4] Which leads to Buddhahood.

[5] i.e. the repetition of Amitābha's name as taught by the Pure Land School; this repetition also enables the repeater to disentangle his mind from all feelings and discrimination and to attain samādhi. Cases are on record of adepts of the Pure Land School, knowing, in advance, of the time of their death. This is possible only after their attainment of samādhi which manifested itself simultaneously with prajñā, or wisdom, called the wisdom of mutual response.

desire, anger and stupidity and all kinds of thought so that the Dharma nature[1] of the Bhūtatathatā[2] can manifest itself.

In our outer training, we should not kill the living but should release all living creatures; we should transmute the ten evils[3] into the ten good virtues;[4] we should not eat meat and drink alcoholic liquors in order not to produce the sinful karma[5] of unintermittent suffering; and we should know that the Buddha-seed arises from conditional causation, that the commitment of many evil karmas is followed by the certain fall into the hells, and that the performance of many good karmas is rewarded with blessing ensuring our enjoyment of them. And so the ancients taught us this: 'Refrain from committing all evil actions (and) perform all good actions.' You have already read the causal circumstances of the killing of members of the Śākya clan by the Crystal King (Virūḍhaka) and know of this (law of causality).[6]

At present, all over the world, people are suffering from (all sorts of) calamity and are in the depth of the aeon (kalpa) of slaughter. This is the retribution (for evil actions). We (should) always exhort worldly men to refrain from taking life and to release living creatures, to take vegetarian food, to (think of the Buddha and) repeat his name, so that everybody can escape from the turning wheel of cause and effect.

All of you should believe and observe (this teaching) and sow now the good cause for reaping later the Buddha-fruit.

The Seventh Day

This ephemeral life is like a dream,
(And) this illusory substance is not stable.
If we rely not on the compassion of our Buddha
How can we ascend the transcendental Way?

In this life which is like a dream and an illusion, we pass our time in an upside-down manner. We do not realize the greatness of the Buddha

[1] Dharma nature, or Dharmatā in Sanskrit, is nature underlying all things.

[2] Bhūtatathatā is the real, 'as thus always', or 'certainly so'; i.e. reality as contrasted with unreality or appearance, and unchanging or immutable as contrasted with form or phenomena.

[3] The ten evils are: killing, stealing, adultery, lying, double-tongue, coarse language, filthy talk, covetousness, anger and perverted views.

[4] The ten good virtues are defined as the non-committal of the ten evils.

[5] That which sin does, its karma, producing subsequent suffering without interruption.

[6] See page 30.

and do not think of escaping from (the realm of) birth and death. We let our good and evil (actions) decide our rise and fall and we accept the retribution according to their karmic effects. This is why in this world, few accomplish good deeds but many commit evil actions, and few are rich and noble but many are poor and mean. In the six worlds of existence, there are all kinds of suffering. There are living beings who are born in the morning and die in the evening. There are those who live only a few years and others who live many years. They are not all masters of themselves. For this reason, we should rely on the Buddha's compassion if we want to find a way (out of this mess), because the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas possess the power of their vows of kindness, pity, joy and renunciation and can deliver us from the bitter ocean (of mortality) for our (safe) arrival at the bright 'other shore'. They are kind and compassionate and when they see living beings enduring suffering, they take pity on them and liberate them so that they can escape suffering and enjoy happiness. Their joy and renunciation consist in their rejoicing and praise for living beings who accomplish meritorious deeds or give rise to thoughts of kindness in the mind, and in granting all requests according to the latter's requirements.

When the World Honoured One practised His self-cultivation from the causal ground,[1] His deeds (in the successive Bodhisattva stages of His former lives) consisted in His renunciation of His own head, brain, bone and marrow. For this reason, He said:

> In the Universe, there is not a spot of land as small as a mustard-seed where I have not sacrificed my lives or have not buried my bones.

Today, all of you should endeavour to hold the hua t'ou firm (in your mind); be careful not to waste your time.

The Closing Day

Dear friends, I congratulate you all on the conclusion of this Ch'an week. You have completed your merit-(orious training) and in just a moment, the gathering will come to an end and I will have to congratulate you.

[1] Or cause-ground, the stage of self-cultivation which leads to the fruit-ground, or stage of attainment of Buddhahood.

According to the ancients, the opening and closing of a Ch'an week do not mean much, for it is (more) important to hold a hua t'ou continuously (in mind) until one's complete enlightenment. At present, no matter whether you have been awakened or not, we must follow the procedure set forth in the (standing) rules and regulations. During these (two) Ch'an weeks, you did not make any difference between day and night, because your (only) aim was your own awakening. The (ultimate) purpose of the meeting was, therefore, to produce men of ability for (spreading) the Buddhist doctrine. If you have wasted your time without achieving any result, you will indeed have missed a (great) opportunity.

Now, the (Venerable) Abbot and group leaders will follow the ancient rules and regulations and will examine the result of your training. I hope you will not talk wildly (when questioned); you should, in the presence of others, give in a sentence (a summary of) your achievement. If your replies are in order, the (Venerable) Abbot will confirm your realization. The ancients said:

'(Self-) cultivation takes an unimaginable time[1]
(While) enlightenment in an instant is attained.

If the training is efficient, enlightenment will be attained in one finger-snap.

In days gone by, Ch'an master Hui Chueh of Lang Yeh mountain, had a woman disciple who called on him for instruction. The master taught her to examine into the sentence: 'Take no notice.'[2] She followed his instruction strictly without backsliding. One day, her house caught fire, but she said: 'Take no notice.' Another day, her son fell into the water and when a bystander called her, she said: 'Take no notice.' She observed exactly her master's instruction by laying down all causal thoughts.[3]

One day, as her husband lit the fire to make fritters of twisted dough, she threw into the pan full of boiling (vegetable) oil a batter which made a noise. Upon hearing the noise, she was instantaneously enlightened.[4] Then she threw the pan of oil on the ground, clapped her hands and

[1] Lit. three great asaṅkhya: kalpas beyond number, the three timeless periods of a Bodhisattva's progress to Buddhahood.

[2] Lit. 'Let it go.'

[3] Thoughts productive of causes leading to effects.

[4] Her training was already very effective in disentangling her mind from the sense-organs, sense-data and perceptions, i.e. her mind was undisturbed at the time, and the noise had a tremendous effect on it. She did not hear it by means of her faculty of hearing which had ceased functioning, but through the very function of her self-nature which exposed her real 'face', hence her enlightenment.

laughed.[1] Thinking she was insane, her husband scolded her and said: 'Why do you do this? Are you mad?' She replied: 'Take no notice.' Then she went to master Hui Chueh and asked him to verify her achievement. The master confirmed that she had obtained the holy fruit.

Dear friends, those of you who have been awakened (to the truth), please come forward and say something about your realization.

(After a long while, as no one came forward, Master Hsu Yun left the hall. The (Venerable) Dharma master Ying Tz'u continued to hold the examination, and when it was over, Master Hsu Yun returned to the hall to instruct the assembly.)

Master Hsu Yun said:

In this tumultous world and (especially in this) bustling and disorderly city, how can one have spare time for, and thought of, coming here to sit in meditation and to hold a hua t'ou? (However), the deep good roots possessed by the people of Shanghai, in combination with the flourishing Buddha Dharma and the unsurpassed co-operating cause have made this great opportunity available for our gathering.

From olden time till now, we have had the Teaching, the Discipline (Vinaya), the Pure Land and the Esoteric (Yoga) Schools. A rigorous comparison between these schools and the Ch'an Sect proves the superiority of the latter. Earlier, I also spoke of this unsurpassed Sect, but owing to the present decline of Buddha Dharma, men of ability are not available. Formerly, in my long journeys on foot I went to and stayed at various monasteries but what I see now cannot be compared with what I saw then. I am really ashamed of my ignorance, but the (Venerable) Abbot who is very compassionate, and the group leaders who are very courteous, have pushed me forward (to preside over this meeting). This task should have been entrusted to the (venerable) old Dharma master Ying Tz'u who is an (acknowledged) authority on both Ch'an and the scriptures and is an (experienced) senior. I am now a useless man and cannot do anything, and I hope you will all follow him and push forward without backsliding.

Ancestor Kuei Shan said: 'It is regrettable that we were born at the end of the semblance period,[2] so long after the passing of the holy period,

[1] Usually after an awakening, or satori in Japanese, one is seized with a desire to cry' jump, dance or do something abnormal, like throwing down the pan of oil. If one fails to subdue this desire, one will catch the Ch'an illness described in Han Shan's autobiography.

[2] The three periods of Buddhism are: (1) the period of the holy, correct or real doctrine of the Buddha, lasting 500 years, followed by (2) the image, or semblance period of 1,000 years, and then by (3) the period of decay and termination, lasting 3,000, some say 10,000 years, after which Maitreya Buddha is to appear and restore all things.

when the Buddha Dharma is disregarded and when people pay little attention to it. I am (however) expressing my humble opinion to make the coming generation understand it.'

The Dharma name of (Master) Kuei Shan[1] was Ling Yu; he was a native of Fu Chien[2] province. He followed Ancestor Pai Chang and realized his (self-) mind (at the latter's monastery.) The ascetic[3] Szu Ma saw that Kuei Shan mountain in Hunan province was auspicious and would become the meeting place for an assembly of 1,500 learned monks. At the time Kuei Shan was a verger of Pai Chang monastery where, during a visit Dhūta Szu Ma met him, recognized him as the right owner of the mountain and invited him to go there to establish a monastery. Kuei Shan was a man of the T'ang dynasty (618–906) and the Buddha Dharma was already at the end of its semblance period. For this reason, he was sorry he was not born earlier, because at the time the Buddha Dharma was difficult to understand and worldly men, whose believing minds were retrograding, refused to make efforts in their study of the doctrine, with the result that there was no hope for their attainment of the Buddha fruit. Over a thousand years have elapsed since the time of Kuei Shan and not only has the semblance period passed, but over 900 years of the present period of termination have also elapsed. (Therefore), worldly men of good roots are now very much fewer. This is why men believing in the Buddha Dharma are many and men who actually realize the truth are very few.

I now compare my own case with that of those who are now studying the Buddha Dharma and who have the advantage of all kinds of convenience. In the reigns of Hsien Feng (1851–61) and Tung Chih (1862–74), all monasteries were destroyed in the region south of the three rivers, where only the T'ien T'ung monastery remained intact. During the Tai Ping rebellion (1850–64), monks of the Chung Nan mountains came (to the South) to rebuild (these monasteries) and at the time, they were equipped each with only a gourd and a basket, and did not possess as many things as you have now. Later, the Buddha Dharma gradually flourished again, and monks began to carry their loads (with a pole over the shoulder). At present, they even carry leather suitcases but they do not pay much attention to the correct practice of the doctrine. Formerly, Ch'an monks wishing to call at various monasteries for instruction, had to journey on foot. Now, they can travel by train, motor car, steamer and

[1] In deference to him, Master Ling Yu was called Kuei Shan, after the name of the mountain.

[2] The map version is Fukien province.

[3] Dhūta = a monk engaged in austerities: an ascetic.

aeroplane which relieve them of all (previous) hardships but intensify their enjoyment in indulgence and ease. At present, in spite of the increasing number of Buddhist institutions and Dharma masters, no one pays attention to the fundamental question, and from morning to evening everybody seeks only knowledge and interpretation with the least heed for (self-) cultivation and realization. At the same time, they do not know that (self-) cultivation and realization are the essentials of the doctrine.

(Ch'an master) Yung Chia said in his Song of Enlightenment:

Get at the root. Do not worry about twigs.
(Be) like pure crystal round the precious moon.[1]
Alas! in this time of decay and in this evil world
Living beings of ill fortune are hard to discipline.
The holy period's long passed and perverted views are deep.
With Demon strong and Dharma weak hatred and harm prevail.
When they hear the Tathagata's Instantaneous Dharma door,
They hate not having smashed it into pieces.
While their minds so act their bodies will then suffer;
They cannot accuse or blame their fellow-men.

If you would avoid unintermittant karma,[2]
Do not vilify the wheel of the Buddha's Law.[3]
In my youth I amassed much learning,
Sought sūtras, śāstras, and their commentaries
Endlessly discriminating between name and form.[4]
As one vainly counting sandgrains in the ocean
I was severely reprimanded by the Buddha,
Who asked what gain derived from counting others' gems.

Yung Chia called on the Sixth Patriarch for instruction and was completely enlightened. The Patriarch called him the 'Overnight Enlightened One'. For this reason, the ancients said: 'The search for truth in sūtras and śāstras is like entering the sea to count its sand-grains.'

[1] Enlightenment is the root and other details, such as supramundane powers and wonderful works are twigs. This is why enlightened masters never talked about miracles. All this is likened to the crystal which, if clung to, will hinder the attainment of enlightenment, symbolized by the moon.

[2] Karma which sends the sinner to the Avīci hell, the last of the eight hot hells in which punishment, pain, form, birth, death, continue without intermission.

[3] Dharma cakra in Sanskrit, Buddha truth which is able to crush all evil and all opposition, like Indra's wheel, and which rolls on from man to man, place to place, age to age.

[4] Name and form: everything has a name, e.g. sound, or has appearance, i.e. the visible; both are unreal and give rise to delusion.

The Ch'an Sect's device is likened to the precious Vajra king sword[1] which cuts all things touching it and destroys all that runs up against its (sharp) point. It is the highest Dharma door (through which) to attain Buddhahood at a stroke.[2] (To give you an example, I will tell you the story of) Ch'an master Shen Tsan who travelled on foot when he was young and who became enlightened after his stay with ancestor Pai Chang. After his enlightenment, he returned to his former master and the latter asked him: 'After you left me, what (new) acquisition did you make at other places?' Shen Tsan replied: 'I made no acquisition.' He was then ordered to serve his (former) master.

One day, as his (former) master took a bath and ordered him to scrub his dirty back, Shen Tsan patted him on the back and said: 'A good Buddha hall but the Buddha is not saintly.' His master did not understand what he meant, turned his head and looked at the disciple who said again: 'Although the Buddha is not saintly, he sends out illuminating rays.'

Another day, as his master was reading a sūtra under the window, a bee knocked against the window paper[3] trying to get out (of the room). Shen Tsan saw the struggling bee and said: 'The universe is so vast and you do not want to get out. If you want to pierce old paper, you will get away in the (non-existent) year of the donkey!'[4] After saying this, he sang the following poem:

> 'It refuses to get out through the empty door
> And knocks against the window stupidly.
> To pierce old paper will take a hundred years,
> Oh when will it succeed in getting out?'

Thinking that Shen Tsan was insulting him, the (old) master put his sūtra aside and asked him: 'You went away for so long: whom did you meet, what did you learn and what makes you so talkative now?' Shen Tsan replied: 'After I left you, I joined the Pai Chang community where master Pai Chang gave me an indication as to how to halt (thinking and discriminating). As you are now old, I have returned to pay the debt of gratitude I owe you.' Thereupon, the master informed the assembly (of

[1] The royal diamond gem, or indestructible sword which destroys ignorance and delusion
[2] Lit. on the spot.
[3] In the East, thin sheets of white paper were, and are still, used instead of window glass.
[4] Old paper is old sūtras. The sentence means: If you want to search for the truth in old sūtras, you will never realize it, for it can only be experienced in the training. The meaning is: If you want to 'pierce' old sūtras in your quest of your self-nature, you will never succeed in experiencing it.

the incident), ordered a vegetarian banquet (in honour of Shen Tsan) and invited him to expound the Dharma. The latter ascended to the seat and expounded the Pai Chang doctrine, saying:

Spiritual light shines on in solitude[1]
Disentangling the sense organs from sense data.[2]
Experience of true eternity
Depends not just on books.[3]
Mind-nature being taintless
Fundamentally is perfect.
Freedom from falsehood-producing causes
Is the same as absolute Buddhahood.

After hearing this, his master became awakened to the truth and said: 'I never expected that in my old age I would hear about the supreme pattern.' Then he handed over the management of the monastery to Shen Tsan and respectfully invited him to become his own master.

You see how free and easy this all is! We sat in this Ch'an meeting for over ten days and yet why did we not experience the truth? This is because we were not seriously determined in our training, or we took it for child's play, or we thought it required sitting quiet in meditation in a Ch'an hall. None of this is correct and men who really apply their minds to this training, do not discriminate between the mutable and immutable, or against any kind of (daily) activity. They can do it while in the street, at the noisy market place, or anywhere (they may happen to be).

Formerly, there was a butcher monk who called on learned masters for instruction. One day, he arrived at a market place and passed a butcher's shop where every buyer insisted on having 'pure meat'.[4] Suddenly, the butcher got angry and, putting down his chopper, asked them: 'Which piece of meat is not pure?' Upon hearing this, the butcher monk was instantaneously enlightened.[5]

[1] i.e. independent, not attached to and relying on anything.

[2] This disentanglement is followed by the state of Samādhi, with simultaneous functioning of Prajñā, or Wisdom.

[3] If one clings to names and terms, one will be held in bondage by them.

[4] Prime meat is called 'pure meat' in China.

[5] The butcher monk was so called because he attained enlightenement upon hearing the butcher's voice. He was undergoing intense training when he passed the butcher's shop and his mind was already still and free from all thinking and discerning. The butcher's loud voice made a great impact on the monk's mind and was heard, not by the ear's faculty of hearing, but by the very function of the self-nature. When the function of the self-nature manifested itself, the substance or essence of the self-nature, became apparent, hence his enlightenment.

This shows that the ancients did not require to sit in meditation in a Ch'an hall, when they underwent their training. Today, not one of you speaks about awakening. Is this not a waste of time? I now (respectfully) request the (Venerable) Master Ying Tzu and the other masters to hold the examination.

Master Hsu Yun's saying at the closing of the (two) Ch'an weeks.

After tea and cakes had been served, all the assembly stood up when the Venerable Master Hsu Yun, in formal robe (with large sleeves) entered the hall again and sat in front of the (jade) Buddha. With a strip of bamboo, he drew a circle[1] in the air, saying:

Convocation and meditation!
Opening and closing!
When will all this come to an end?[2]
When (productive) causes halt abruptly.
External objects will vanish.
Mahāprajñāpāramitā![3]

When mind is still, essence and function (of themselves) return to normal.[4]
Fundamentally there is nor day nor night but only complete brightness.[5]
Where's the dividing line 'twixt South and North, 'twixt East and West?[6]
Without hindrance things are seen to be the product of conditioning causes.[7]
While birds sing and flowers smile, the moon reaches the stream![8]

[1] The circle symbolizes the completeness of the Dharmakāya.

[2] These three lines show the illusory mundane activities which have nothing to do with the experiencing of the truth.

[3] When all causes productive of effects come to an end, the phenomenal also disappears, and this is the moment when one's 'great wisdom reaches the other shore', or Mahāprajñā-pāramitā.

[4] When the mind is stripped of feelings and passions, it will be still; this is the moment the essence and function of the self-natured Buddha are restored to normal.

[5] Fundamentally, there is only the immutable bright wisdom which is unchanging.

[6] When the self-nature is under delusion, it is split into ego and dharma, or subject and object, hence all kinds of discrimination between East and West and North and South. Now that enlightenment is attained, where is all this division?

[7] The phenomenal is created only by conditioning causes but is devoid of real nature.

[8] Our delusion is caused by our attachment to things heard, seen, felt and known, but if the mind is disentangled from the hearing, seeing, feeling and knowing or discerning, we will attain the Complete Enlightenment of Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva (see discourse on the second day of the second Ch'an week). The two faculties of hearing and seeing are mentioned here because they are constantly active, whereas the other four faculties are sometimes dormant. If one succeeds in disentangling the hearing from the birds' song and the seeing from the smiling flowers, the moon, symbol of enlightenment, will shine on the stream, for water is a symbol of the self-nature. This sentence means that one can attain enlightenment while in the midst of sound and sight which symbolize the illusory world.

Now, what shall I say to close the meeting?

'When the board is struck, the bowl springs up!
Let us scrutinize the Prajñāpāramitā!'[1]

Now let us close the meeting.

[1] In a monastery, the board is struck for calling to meals. If the mind is efficiently stripped of all feelings and passions, all the eight vijñānas or consciousnesses will be frozen and inactive. This moment is referred to, in Ch'an parlance, as 'a temporary death followed by a resurrection', i.e. death of delusion and resurrection of self-nature. When the self-nature recovers its freedom, it will function and hear the sound of the board. As the phenomenal and noumenal are now an undivided whole, the self-natured Dharmakāya will pervade everywhere, including the bowl which reveals its presence. For this reason, the ancients said: 'The exuberant green bamboos are all Dharmakāya and luxuriant yellow flowers are nothing but Prajñā.' This attainment is made possible only by the Prajñāpāramitā which all seekers of the truth should put into practice.

A PATH TO ULTIMATE HAPPINESS

True Sincerity
towards others

Purity of Mind
inside

Equality
in everything we see

Proper Understanding
of ourselves and our enviroment

Compassion
helping others in a wise and unconditional way

See Through
to the truth of impermanence

Let Go
of all wandering thoughts and attachments

Freedom
of mind and spirit

Accord With Conditions
go along with the enviroment

Be Mindful of Amitabha Buddha
wishing to reach the Pure Land and follow in His Teachings

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
VENERABLE MASTER CHIN KONG

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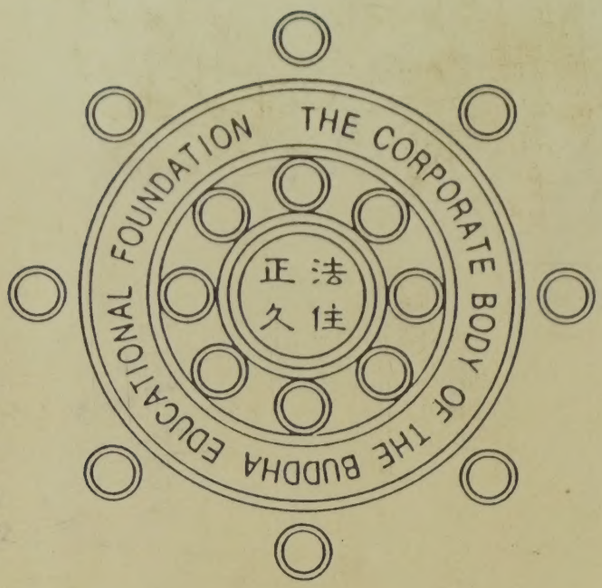

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The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation
11th Floor, 55, Hang Chow S. Rd. Sec 1,Taipei,Taiwan R.O.C.
TEL:(02)3951198 • FAX:(02)3913415
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